

The cover of Desert Magazine, January 1963, features a vibrant photograph of a desert landscape. In the foreground, a dark, rocky wash flows through a dry, scrubby plain. Several dark-colored animals, possibly horses or mules, are grazing in the wash. In the middle ground, a large, smooth, orange-red sand dune rises. To the left of the dune, a massive, dark, craggy rock formation dominates the background. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy clouds. A faint rainbow is visible in the sky, arching over the dune. The magazine's title, "Desert", is written in a large, white, stylized script font on a red rectangular background in the top left corner. To the left of the title, the text "RM aff" is visible. To the right of the title, the text "MAGAZINE of the SOUTHWEST" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font on a yellow rectangular background. Below the title, the date "JANUARY, 1963" and the price "40c" are printed in a black, sans-serif font. In the bottom left corner, a yellow rectangular box contains the text "EXPLORING BAJA'S PACIFIC DUMP YARD" in bold, black, sans-serif font. Below this, the text "HISTORIC PHOTOS: 'Magnesium Flyer' 'Inyo Tram'" is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the box, the text "FIELD TRIP BY BUS OATMAN FIRE AGATE" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

RM
aff

Desert

MAGAZINE of the SOUTHWEST

JANUARY, 1963

40c

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PACIFIC DUMP YARD

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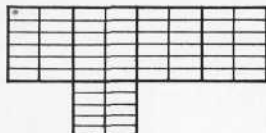


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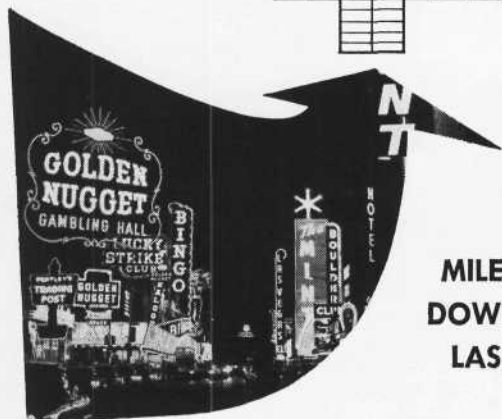
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—THE DESERT IN JANUARY

10 MINUTES CLOSER. There are few problems \$16,000,000 can't settle. That is the amount of money it took to eliminate that last traffic bottleneck on U.S. Highway 99 linking metropolitan Los Angeles and the Low Desert region. The money paid for 10.8 miles of six-lane freeway in the Redlands-Loma Linda area—which brings the desert resort areas around Palm Springs and Twentynine Palms 10 minutes closer to downtown L.A. The traffic signals and re-



BEFORE: L.A.-bound traffic held-up by traffic signal

AFTER: Newly completed freeway in Redlands



duced speed zones in the Redlands stretch were the last to go on the busy desert artery. Now complete are 68 miles of continuous full freeway from Los Angeles to 2.6 miles east of Redlands. Easterly, for a distance of 58 miles to Indio, the highway is either full freeway or divided expressway which is rapidly being converted to full freeway standards. Construction to full freeway, for a distance of six miles east of Banning, is provided in the current state highway budget, with work expected to begin this winter.

But, if you happen to have been one of the thousands of motorists who spent the Thanksgiving weekend on the desert, you

continued on next page

Desert

MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTHWEST • 26TH YEAR

Volume 26

Number 1

CONTENTS FOR JANUARY, 1963

This Month's Cover—

The quiet beauty of Monument Valley's Sand Springs is the subject of this photograph by Hulbert Burroughs.

Observations, Discoveries—

- | | | |
|----|--|-------------------|
| 6 | Desert Detours | OREN ARNOLD |
| 28 | Prehistoric Rock Records of a Star Explosion | WILLIAM C. MILLER |
| 31 | Letters from our Readers | |

Places to Visit—

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| 7 | To Oatman — By Bus — for Fire Agate | GLENN VARGAS |
| 10 | Baja California's "Pacific Dump Yard" | MIDGE HAMSHAW |

Of Art, Books—

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 20 | "I Paint the Ghost Towns" | EVELYNE BOYNTON GRIERSON |
| 38 | New and Interesting Southwest Books | CHARLES SHELTON |
| 39 | DESERT's 1962 Premium Book Awards | |

The Desert News Front—

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------|
| 3 | The Desert in January | |
| 8 | New Ideas for Desert Living | DAN LEE |
| 18 | California's Plan for Colorado River Recreation | |
| 32 | Citizen's Band Radio: Unique, Useful | JAMES TALLON |

Nature's World—

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|------------------|
| 5 | January Garden Guide | |
| 16 | Voices of the Desert Night | LAURITZ MUHLBACH |
| 23 | Golden Eagle — King of Birds | EDMUND C. JAEGER |

Yesterday's Desert—

- | | |
|----|---|
| 12 | Historic Photos of Two Daring Conveyances |
|----|---|



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THE DESERT IN JANUARY (continued from preceding page)

are undoubtedly reading these words with a wry smile on your lips. Even a six-lane freeway can disgorge just so many cars—and the acid test came on the Sunday night following Thanksgiving, hard on the heels of the Redlands link grand opening. Homeward-bound traffic was bumper-to-bumper from Redlands desertward to Thousand Palms. Highway patrolmen estimate traffic was "flowing" at a rate of two-to-five miles-per-hour at dusk.

* * *

24 K. BOMB SHELTER. The Sidewinder Mine, 16 miles north of Victorville, is going to see new duty: community bomb shelter. It will be a "do-it-yourself" project, according to Victor Valley CD Director, Gaylord Widney, who says he is at "patience's end" in his battle to secure provisions and equipment through regular government channels for a more conventional town shelter. The Sidewinder, inactive since 1923, can protect 2000 people. The old gold mine's many tunnels are bored into solid quartz and granite.

* * *

BACK TO NATURE. The 20-acre Orphan Mining Claim—one of two private patented holdings within the boundaries of Grand Canyon National Park—has been deeded to the Federal Government—subject to certain reserved rights. In 1961, the possibility that the mining company might approve construction of a controversial hotel on the Canyon wall, drew vigorous protests from conservationists, and led directly to the successful property-transfer negotiations. Under the terms of the deed of conveyance, the mining company will be able to work its uranium mine for 25 years—and then "the claim will be cleared of developments and returned to its natural state." Twenty-five years is a long time in the lifetime of a man, but it is nothing to Grand Canyon.

* * *

POLY-UNSATURATED. An expected 2000 acres of Palo Verde Valley farmlands are being planted to a new crop for this area: safflower. Planting will continue through this month, and by June the Blythe area should be ready to make a substantial contribution to the nation's larder of poly-unsaturated cooking oils.

* * *

WATER, WATER. The water behind Glen Canyon Dam begins backing up this month, but the Bureau of Reclamation is going to allow river runners to continue with their tourist programs at least through the spring months. After that, the power boats take over. In order to begin generating power at Glen Canyon, there must be six-million acre-feet of water stored behind the new dam. This is "dead storage"—not available either to generate power or for irrigation. Some officials hope this entire dead storage can be accumulated during 1963—given normal rain and snow falls this winter. Six-million acre-feet are equal to a half-year's flow of the Colorado River, and already California users of Colorado River water are being told that 1963 will be a year of austerity.

* * *

FBI TO THE RESCUE. Kidnap victims and presidents of robbed banks are not the only ones who can count on the FBI for help. We now add the Joshua tree to the list of those comforted by the unsleeping presence of the efficient FBI. Two Caliente men admitted guilt on one of three counts of illegal cutting of Joshua trees from the publicly owned lands. The alleged depredation, which took place on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management 15 miles north of Barstow, was investigated by BLM specialists and by the FBI. The findings were placed before the Grand Jury, resulting in the three charges. This is the first California criminal case involving Joshua trees to be handled by the Department of Justice.

* * *

JANUARY CALENDAR. There are three outstanding events on the desert this month; Jan. 1-5—Arizona National Livestock Show in Phoenix; Jan. 25-26—11th Annual Square Dance Festival, El Centro; and Jan. 26-27—23rd Annual Rodeo, Palm Springs

///

Desert Garden Guide

... FOR JANUARY



Perennials

Azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons transplant best at this time of the year. Top roots should be barely covered—you can use a light mulch. Use a malathion spray to kill aphids which may appear on new growth.

CALIFORNIA DESERTS: Bare-root roses are on the market in January. The whole plant can be immersed in water for a couple of days before planting... then mound the soil around the bush until only an inch or so of the plant is exposed. Keep the mound moist until growth shows, then gradually remove the soil. The rose's crown or grafting point should be just above the level of the ground after the dirt mound is gone.

NEVADA, UTAH AND NORTHERN ARIZONA: January is still too cold to do much gardening. Protection will be needed for a great many plants. Dormant spraying can be done this month in all desert areas. Houseplants need more water in winter and full sun in January.



Annuals

CALIFORNIA DESERTS: Summer blooming bulbs may be planted this month. If you neglected to plant bulbs last fall for spring bloom, you can start them in pots and have blooms in six weeks or so. Bulbs should have some roots attached when you buy them, and they may even have begun to sprout. Choose only the large bulbs of Amaryllis. Those less than 2½ inches in diameter won't bloom for a year or more. Do not bury the bulb completely—leave it half exposed.

Carnations are not difficult to grow in the Southwest. Since it takes about six months from seed to bloom, the seeds should be planted in containers this month. Be sure the container has drainage holes—cover the bottom with a layer of coarse material to help drainage. A layer of sphagnum moss atop the soil will help prevent "damping-off." Cover the whole with Saran Wrap and paper. It will take two weeks for seeds to germinate—depending on room temperature. When the seedlings show, remove the cover and place the container in direct sunlight. Transplanting should take place when the plants with true leaves are about two- to three-inches tall, and outdoor temperature remains above 40 degrees.

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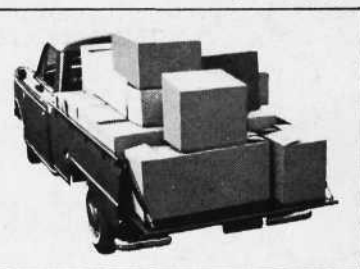
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desert detours

by Oren Arnold

"Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." Mark 6:31

"New Year's Resolutions" too often are childish. Nevertheless, January truly is stock-taking time—and our inventories had best be spiritual. Keep in mind that Jesus didn't do his soul searching on a busy city street. He went out on a lonely desert hill.

And don't belittle your power, your potential, no matter how poor your past. "Everything of importance in the world," a wise man has told us, "was begun by one man or woman."

If I understand our government economists (ridiculous premise on the face of it) we are not to worry about the 300-billion-dollar national debt. We can easily unshoulder that burden by taking a go-now-pay-later vacation, making a down payment on a third family car, and voting a bigger loan for Outer Slobovia. All we have to fear is fear itself.

In the "Good Old Days," only an umpire could call a strike.

Seems the desert school teacher asked one lad what steam is. The boy, fed up with 110-degree temperatures, answered wisely—"It's water gone crazy with the heat."

My beloved Adele, who has been taking a slimnastics course and eating only negligibly, has sylphed down a whole two pounds. Whereas me, I eat everything anybody will set before me, plus extra milk and cream at bedtime, and I too have sylphed down two pounds. It's them Democrats in power that have brought about such inequities.

Got into a campfire storytelling competition the other night, out there at the foot of Superstition Mountain, and won first prize with this true bit from history:

Mrs. Henry Stevens in 1867 was a pioneer rancher's wife. One day she saw a rag move on a bush outside her kitchen window—but she hadn't hung any rags out there. Quickly she grabbed up her rifle and fired. An Apache Indian leaped up and fell dead.

Her shot was signal for 50 skulking savages to attack. With her children and one elderly man, she defended her house for six hours. Finally passing cowboys heard the shots and came to their rescue. When it was over, the cowboy leader asked where her husband was, and learned that he was in town on business. He offered to take a message in for her.

Mrs. Stevens wrote: "Dear Henry. The Apaches come. I am almost out of buckshot. Please send me some more. Your loving wife."

Seems as if the machine that once did away with the horse is now well on the way toward doing away with people.

Undoubtedly man will soon be traveling in space and visiting other planets. "It all makes me feel insignificant," admits Tom Travis of Arizona. "I haven't even seen the Grand Canyon yet."

Of all the things on our desert, I have most respect for the giant saguaro cactus. That dignified growth is nature's

grandest exhibit in adaptability. It not only survived, it prospered; took over and bossed a hostile environment, made itself dominant, and now beautifies and enriches the world. How many of us human beings can say as much?

I also have respect for the Navajo Indians, another rare group of desert dwellers. Some decades ago the whole tribe, about 25,000 of them, were shunted to an impossibly barren area with the fond expectancy that they'd soon die out. Today there are 85,000 of them, prospering and becoming a force in our desert citizenry. Somehow I think we palefaces can now point to them with pride.

"My problem," says Edward Sims, father of four lovely daughters, "is not keeping the wolf from the door, but feeding the pack."

Old desert Dan needed a new car, but lacked the money. So he advertised a cow, in the car-dealer style: "For sale, cow. Clean. White side walls. Like new. Price \$100. Accessories: Horns, \$40. Udder: \$100. Four split hoofs, \$10 each. Extra stomach, \$40. Tail, \$10. Used only by a gentle old grandmother, who never drove her from the pasture at more than 10 miles per hour. Bargain."

Heaven knows I try to be socially acceptable. I watch TV, so I use all the soaps, sprays and roll-ons, the tooth pastes, mouth washes and hair oils. But whenever I return from a desert outing, I always look and reek like somebody who hadn't seen civilization in six weeks. Some men, I suppose, simply aren't meant to be fastidious.

You good folks probably have the usual January pile-up of Christmas cards, too pretty to throw away, yet useless. Well, mail them to Literacy House, Singar Nagar, Lucknow, India, where they'll be used in educational and religious handicrafts. (Do NOT mail to me or to this magazine.) Tear off all but the pictures first, to save postage.

I have observed that a man with a lot of money to burn, tends to go out and find a little ball of fire to help him burn it.

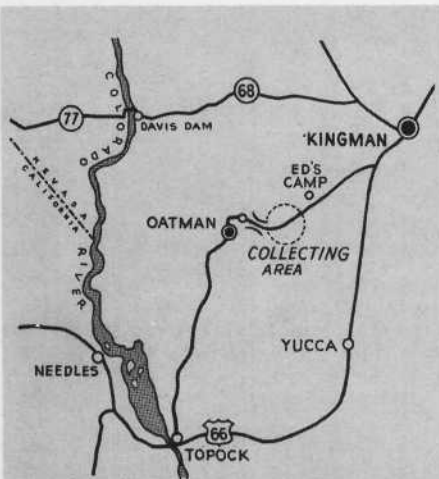
"I got the 5-B complaint," alleged Sam Miller, in from his ranch. "I'm suffering from Baldness, Bridge-work, Bay Window, Bifocals, and Bunions."

No matter what we say against the desert in August—which is aplenty—no matter how "sear" and "lonely" it can get at times, January is the prime season for enjoying it. Whatever your fatigue may be—real or imaginary—physical, mental or nervous—it can be alleviated just by going "out" one sunny afternoon. Move slowly when you do go, my friend. Don't charge across on a hard hike. Amble, and listen, and look. You'll be exalted by what you discover. ///





ROADSIDE LUNCH AT THE FIRE AGATE FIELD



To the Oatman Fire Agate Field ... By Bus!

By GLENN VARGAS

WHETHER YOU go in your own car, or, as my group has on many occasions, by chartered bus, the Oatman, Arizona, fire agate collecting area remains one of the top gem-mineral field trip destinations in the Southwest.

For rockhound clubs and other large hobby groups, I recommend going by bus. On our most recent Oatman trip, there were, besides my wife and me, 19 of our students from the Palm Springs adult education lapidary class, three children, and bus-driver Joe Hetherington, a 700,000-miles-without-an-accident Greyhound driver who has made a number of these trips with us. The weekend outing cost each of us

about \$10 — and this includes six meals served from our homemade "chuck box."

A large family group would save money, perhaps, taking their own car—but most resistance to a bus field trip does not originate from the cost factor (which is really quite reasonable)—the majority of people balk at going camping in a bus because of the mistaken belief that they will not be able to take along all the personal paraphernalia they deem necessary for a comfortable and enjoyable trip. Actually, we encourage everyone to take card tables, chairs, folding cots, sleeping bags and personal luggage. This equipment rides in the bus's luggage compartment. On a nine-day Death Valley bus trip in which 36 persons participated, the storage space had room to spare.

Cost is not the only advantage to a one-vehicle field trip. The bus group arrives at its destination in much shorter time, for a caravan can travel no faster than its slowest car. Group participation adds to the interest of the trip; everyone sees the same things along the desert roadway—we share information on the landmarks, geology, history. Group travel is congenial — a bus load of people always has one individual to take the lead in seeing that time does not drag. There is no need to pore over maps to familiarize the desert newcomer with the route to the diggings. More frequent stops are possible (cavaran leaders know that once a line of cars pulls over to the side of the road, it is hard to get started again). And, of course, the bus driver does the driving—a fact that is most appreciated on the long trip home after a weekend of digging and scrambling after rocks.

There are some disadvantages to bus travel that should not be ignored. In the event of bad weather, there are no cars to sleep in. A large party can get by in a bus, but comfort suffers somewhat. And the large busses cannot travel all roads that a car will negotiate, and thus the field trip destinations are necessarily limited. But, it never ceases to amaze me just how few are the remote corners of the desert that the bus companies *won't* take a group to.

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continued on page 36



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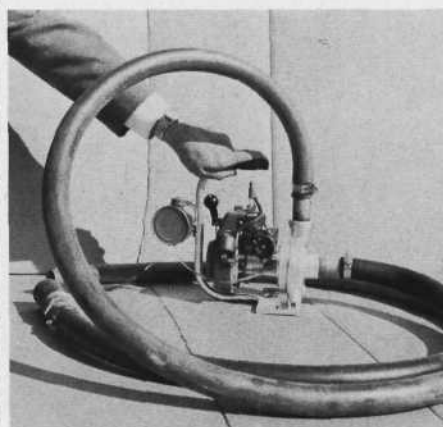
NEW IDEAS for DESERT LIVING

By DAN LEE



Stainless Steel Pack Board—

Light-weight as they come, the new stainless steel packboard from Gerry Mountain Sports is designed to support heavy loads, yet itself weighs only 3½ pounds. Fitted with a comfortable fabric back-cushion, the pack frame looks ideal for short-hop trips and overnights. The weight saved in the construction of the pack allows the user to carry more food, thus increasing range. For price and other details, try: Gerry Mountain Sports, Inc., Boulder, Colorado.



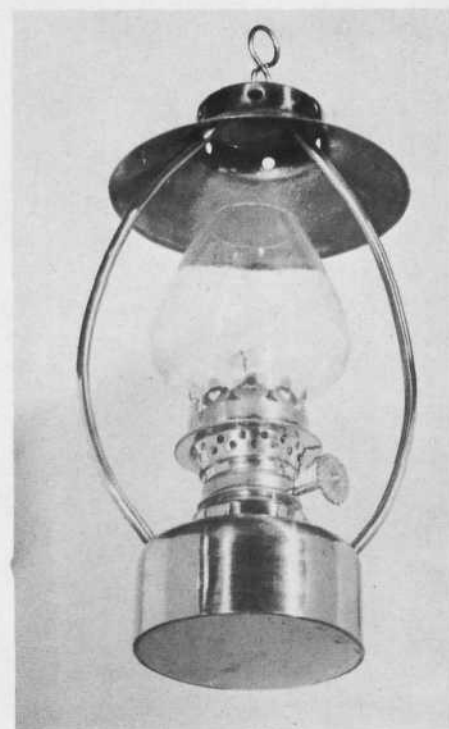
Portable Compact Pump—

The **Paradox Pump** is a centrifugal type with a low weight of only 7½ pounds, but a high capacity of 1800 gallons per hour. I have personally tested this pump and can recommend it for such duties as transferring water from one container to another, for emergency fire fighting duty, and for watering outlying plants and trees from a portable water supply tank. Dimensions are 12x10x7-inches. Built-in carrying handle supports both engine and pump. Has

one-inch intake and discharge nozzles, with a full-flow rate of 30 gallons per minute. Maximum shut-off pressure is 54 psi. Priced at under \$100, from East Side Mfg., Inc., 1801 Bluff Road, Montebello, Calif.

Rustic Kerosene Lamp—

As practical as it is compact, the new Gloy's Lilliput Kerosene Lamp is only 7 inches tall, weighs only 6 ounces, yet produces a mellow, relaxing light just right for patios, tent camping, boats and cabins. Made of solid brass, it has polished flat burners, a broad wick, and can be operated while standing or hanging suspended. Of classic design, this lamp can be obtained from Gloy's Import Co., 11 Addison Street, Larchmont, New York.



Portable Refrigerator—

A new refrigerator called the Mark II, can be powered off the battery in your car, boat, or travel trailer. It can be converted quickly to LP-gas fuel or 100-volt household current. This newcomer appears to be an adequate refrigerator for very short trips—35 pounds storage capacity is low for anything over two days, but it does fill a gap in camping equipment that has been noticed. Other companies are coming into this field, too, and will be reported on later. The Mark II is available from: Selectra Corp., Box 269, Niagara Square Station, Buffalo 1, New York. Overall dimensions are 21¼"x18"x13½". Weight is about 30 pounds.

Camper With a Southern Exposure—

Actually, you can aim the new Open Road camper in any direction, but the exposure is unsurpassed. Broad sliding glass



doors in the rear of the body, plus a unique pull-out porch turns the camper into a rolling patio-equipped home. The sun - deck pull-out is 3-feet by 6-feet. Full drapes inside the camper provide privacy over the glass panels. Many other outstanding features have been built into this startling new camper. The Open Road Bel Air and Newport models are the most refreshing departure in camper design in many years. I predict right now that some enterprising trailer maker follows suit in short order. It proves once again that camper and trailer design need not fall into a rut. Whether or not the new design proves practical over the long haul, the Open Road sliding-door models are sure to attract attention wherever they go. For complete description: Robin Motors, Open Road Campers, 8733 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles 69, Calif.



Go Anywhere Scooter—

This new trail scooter offers flotation-type tires that can operate on as little as five-pounds-per-square-inch, meaning they will cross sand without difficulty. Sand is something almost no power scooter can master, thus *Trail King* has the field almost to itself in this respect. Should make a good companion for scouting desert washes. I have experimented with the same Good-year tire on other vehicles, and can vouch for the fact that the principle is sound. Size

of *Trail King's* tire is 9.50x8. Four-cycle engine with tubular steel frame is standard. Priced at \$450 from Homelite Trail King, 7421 South 204th St., Kent, Washington.

Tree Trimmer—

After years of dragging a power cord while trimming my hedge, I consider the new Gibson hedge clipper and tree trimmer the slickest trick since transistor radios. A tiny $\frac{3}{4}$ -horsepower gasoline engine, air-cooled, is attached to the 30-inch cutter bar. Yank on the recoil starter, and the reciprocating blades whirl along at a healthy 1700 rpm, crunching neatly through branches up to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch in diameter. Two work handles make the Gibson clipper a marvel of good balance. The kill-button is located in the handle so that instant stopping is possible. Total weight is a low 9 pounds, including the engine. A spherical all-attitude fuel tank allows the clipper to be used overhead or upside down, if necessary. Looks like a boon to gardeners, municipal tree trimmers, mobile home parks, and individuals. The Gibson clipper will sell for under \$150, available through: Gibson Hedge and Tree Trimmer, 2618 Nottingham, Los Angeles 27, Calif.



Home Water Purifier—

Water-Gard Corporation sent me a new water purifier that you can attach to your sink or out-of-sight under your drain board with a replaceable filter and shut-off valve. The shut-off allows the user to draw off tap water for dishes, but by turning the valve, all water is forced through the filter, eliminating bad tastes, odors and all matter suspended in the water. After using the new filter for a week, I was impressed with the reliable performance and convenience of the unit. In these days of lowering water reservoirs, more debris than ever floats into your home. Here's a way to keep your water safe and pure under all situations. Removes rust, chlorine, harmful bacteria, algae and sediment. Priced in several models from \$39.95 up. Water Gard literature tells the whole story, from Water Gard Corporation, 5444 W. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles 16, Calif.

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TIME OUT FOR A BREATHER ON THE RUGGED TRIP DOWN TO THE LAGOON



MEXICAN TRUCK DRIVER'S DILEMMA: A ROCK HOLDS-UP ENGINE AFTER SUPPORTS SNAPPED

We Explored the DUMP YARD OF THE PACIFIC

By MIDGE HAMSHAW

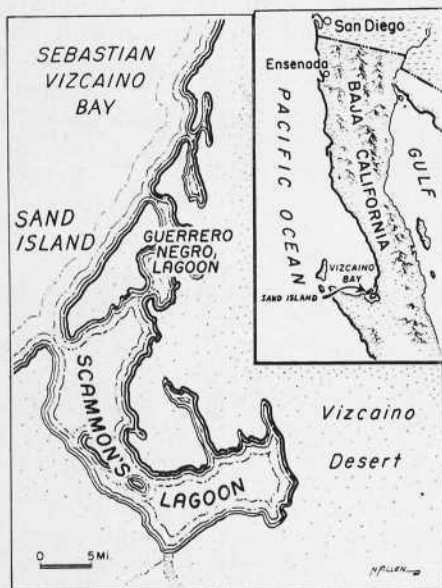
THE SURF tossed "El Patito" safely onto the beach, and our dream became a reality. For many months we had planned a visit to this desolate Baja California sand island where driftage from all over the Pacific Ocean is continually being washed ashore. The unique character of this shoreline earns it the right to be called the "dump yard of the Pacific," where you can beach-comb indefinitely with the constant realization that you might uncover artifacts of early civilizations or shipwrecked treasures.

To reach our dream island we bought a small amphibious jeep, one of the few left from World War II. It was made by the Ford Company in 1943, and was intended to be used as a small maneuverable vehicle from which officers could direct landing operations. This amphibious "duck" is a conventional military 4-wheel-drive jeep enclosed in a heavy-gauge metal tub. All parts are standard except for several heavy rubber seals which serve to keep the water from entering around the drive shaft and other openings. A heavy-duty bilge pump is a useful built-in feature. The propeller operates off a power take-off unit behind the transmission. The steering wheel turns the rudder.

My husband, Wes, found El Patito ("little duck") in a war surplus truck lot in Orange County. I almost fainted when he drove it to our home in La Habra. It was the most dreadful-looking contraption that I



TREASURE FROM THE PACIFIC. SCOTTY HOLDS A 16TH CENTURY URN FOUND ON THE SAND ISLAND.



had ever seen. It took six months to get over the shock, during which time Wes put things in order. Accompanying us to Baja California was Scotty Johnson of Cave Creek, Arizona. Scotty speaks Spanish fluently and has traveled extensively in the Mexican mainland and Central America.

Our poor little duck, heavy with supplies, was grossly underpowered

continued on page 34



WES DISPLAYS BLEACHED WHALE BONES WHICH LIE SCATTERED OVER THE ENTIRE 20-MILE BEACH

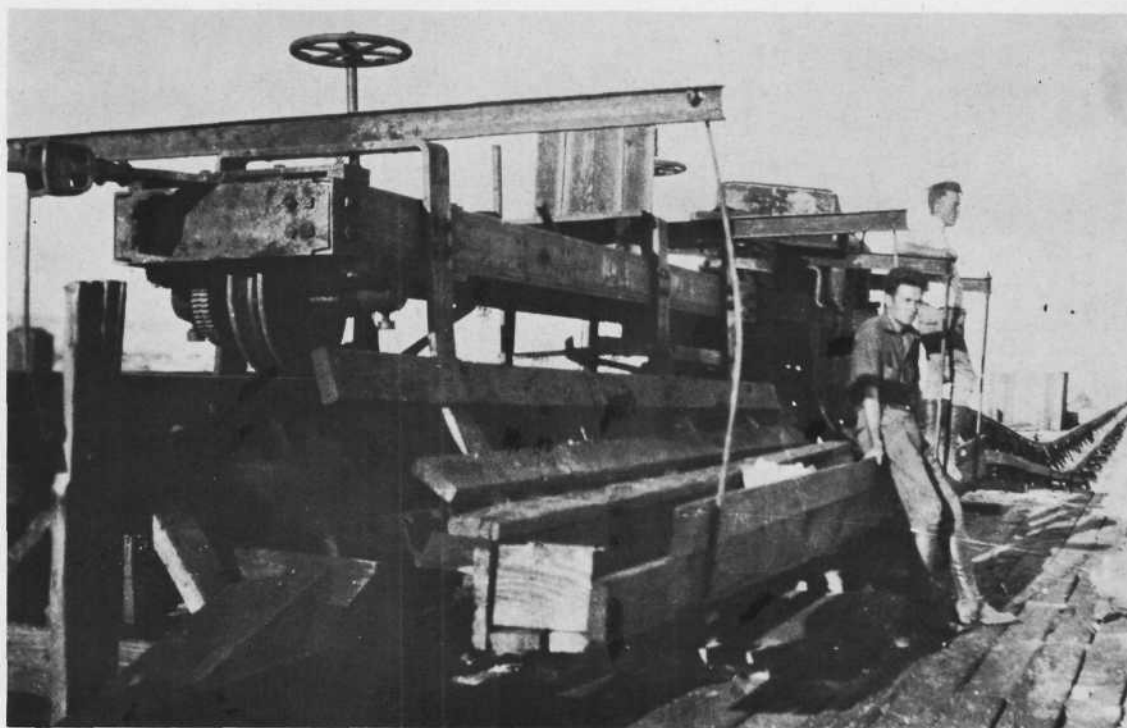
Historic Photos of the High-Riding "Magnesium Flyer"

TO N. M. THOMPSON of Pittsburgh, Pa., a desert outing he made on a hot day in August, 1924, remains vivid in his memory.

"I believe that most of us," writes Thompson, "who have accumulated a little deposit of gray hair, are wont to review past experiences—even the unpleasant ones—with some degree of satisfaction and pleasure. Such was my reaction when I looked through

RIGHT: ONE OF
THE SIDE-SADDLE
CARGO CARRIERS
AT THE
MAGNESIUM
TERMINAL.

BELOW: AT THE
MINE TERMINAL.
THE WORKMEN
ARE LOADING
BAGGED ORE FOR
THE TRIP TO THE
STANDARD GAUGE
RAILROAD ON THE
WEST SHORE OF
SEARLES LAKE.



my old photo album and was reminded of a trip I made on a noteworthy Western rail system some 40 years ago."

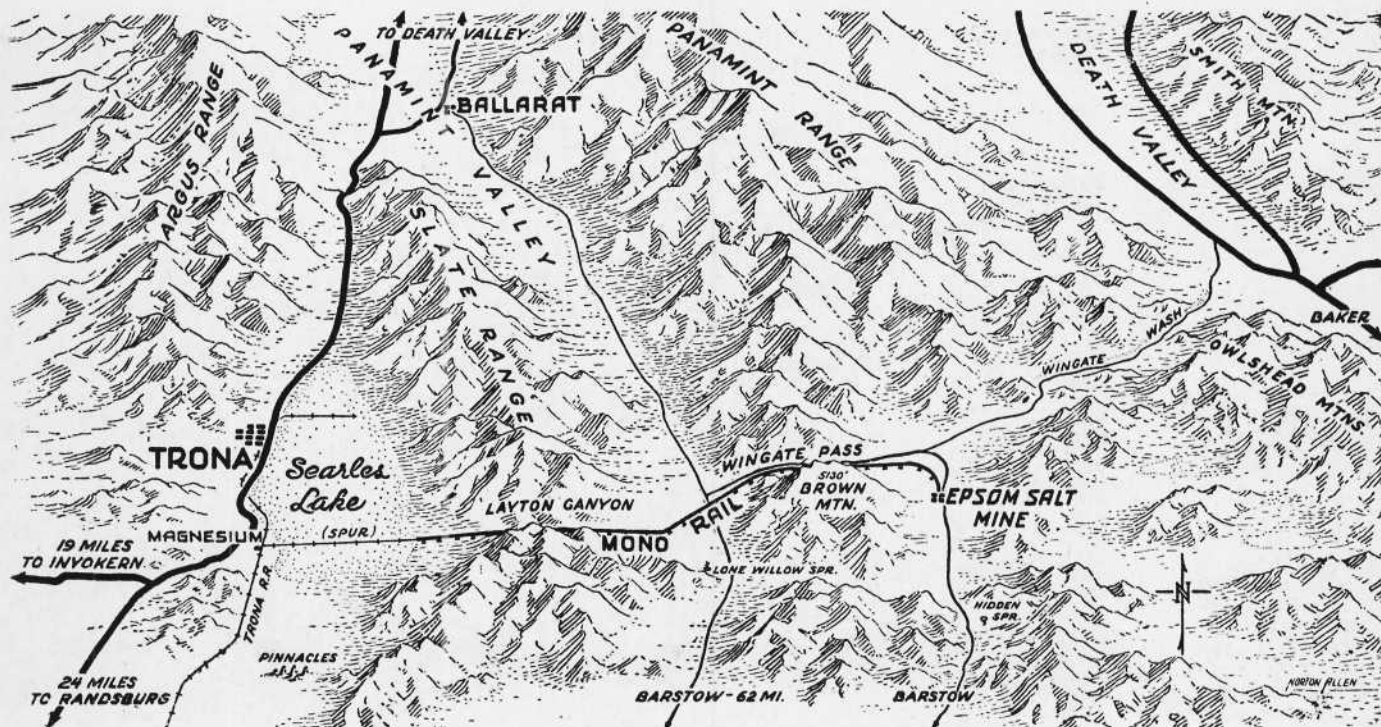
The rail system in question was the single-track affair that packed-out epsom salt (magnesium sulphate) from a mine near the south end of Death Valley, to the railhead near Trona via Wingate Pass in the Panamint Mountains, Panamint Valley,

Layton Canyon in the Slate Range, and Searles (dry) Lake. The mono rail was 28 miles in length. It was built in 1923-24, at an estimated cost of \$7000 per mile in the mountain passes, and \$5000 per mile in the flats.

Construction consisted of standard 6x8-inch ties, eight feet long, placed on eight-foot centers and braced on either side. The plumb posts carried

a 6x8 stringer which in turn supported the single steel rail. There were also two side-rails of timber which acted as guide rails.

The motive power was provided by a Fordson-motored locomotive. The cars were designed like pack saddles, with equilibrium maintained by rollers on either side which ran on the side rails. The engine developed only enough power to pull



LEFT: THE FLEXIBILITY OF A MONORAIL WAS NEEDED FOR THE SHARP TURNS AND STEEP GRADES IN THE PANAMINT AND SLATE MOUNTAINS.

CONTINUED
ON NEXT PAGE

MAGNESIUM FLYER (continued)

three loaded cars. Before a new, more powerful gas-electric engine could be completed for the mono rail, sun and heat splintered the timbers and loosened the bolts of the elevated road bed. The outrigger wheels had worn the wooden guide rails to shreds. Operation was suspended in 1928.

Thompson and two companions made their rail trip after working the graveyard shift (11 p.m. to 7 a.m.) at the American Trona Corp. plant. After repeated delays because

of motor trouble, the "Magnesium Flyer" began its eastward trek. Part of the outbound cargo was a 500-pound block of ice—a weekly treat for the boys at the mine camp. The train broke down several more times and when it finally arrived at the epsom salt loading dock near the mine, the blistering afternoon sun was nearly gone but so was the ice. Thompson estimates the block weighed only 75 pounds when it was unloaded.

The overloaded, overheated engine fared no better on the return trip. It coasted down the Slate Range to

Searles Lake and stopped dead. It was well after dark, and Thompson and his companions had to report to work at 11 that night. So they walked.

"That five-and-a-half mile hike became a madman's nightmare," recalls Thompson. "Much of it was a deadening succession of monotonous sounds of 'slurp, slurp, slurp,' as we crossed the so-called 'dry' lake. With each step, we would sink ankle- and even knee-deep in the soft, gooey, slimy muck."

The adventurers arrived home in time to shower, change clothes, and

... and a rare peek of the Inyo Tram

For 17 years — 1913 to 1930 — the concentrated salt deposits of Saline Valley made their way to market over a spectacular 13.4-mile tramway. The steel cable carried 800-pound capacity buckets over the rugged Inyo Mountains to the railroad near Keeler. The Inyos rise 7000 feet above the desert floor at Keeler.

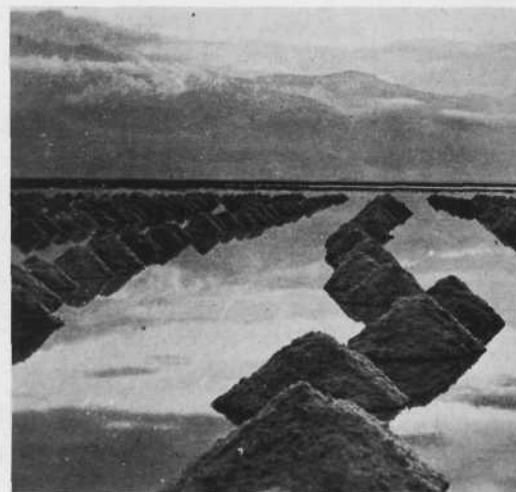
The 300-bucket tram had a capacity of 20 tons of salt an hour. The photos on these pages show that salt was not the only cargo. This is one ride people remembered the rest of their lives!

These historic photos were loaned to *DESERT* by George Stanley of Montebello. They are from the collection of Stanley's cousin, the late Lee DuBois, a mining promoter.

The Inyo Tram has long been in ruins.



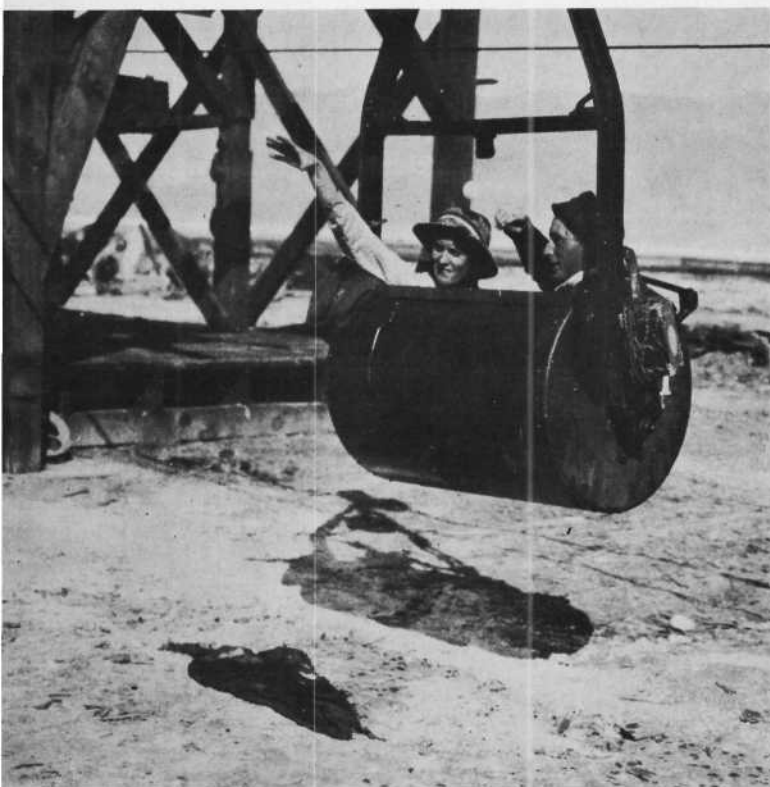
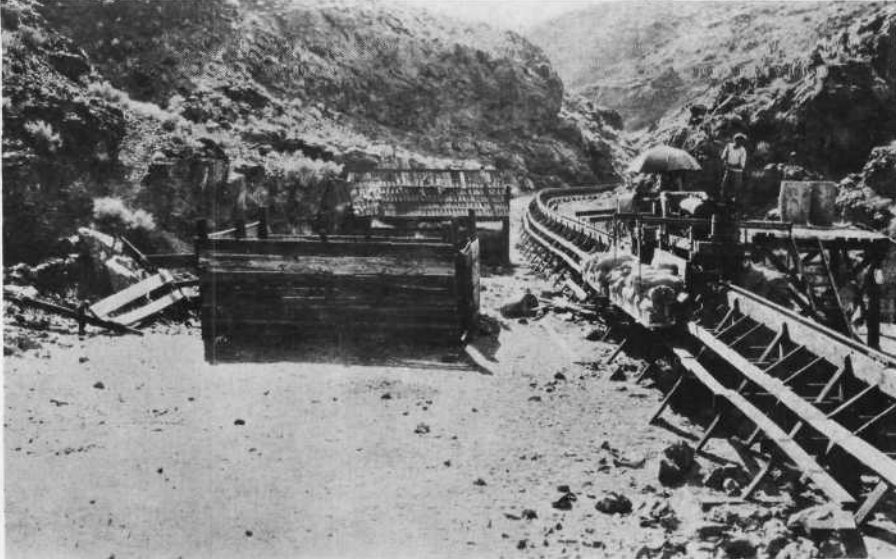
A CAR DESCENDS TO THE VALLEY FLOOR



report to work. The nightmare ended when the shift did, eight hours later.

The 'Magnesium Flyer,' not much as a freight line, was even less suited as a passenger carrier.

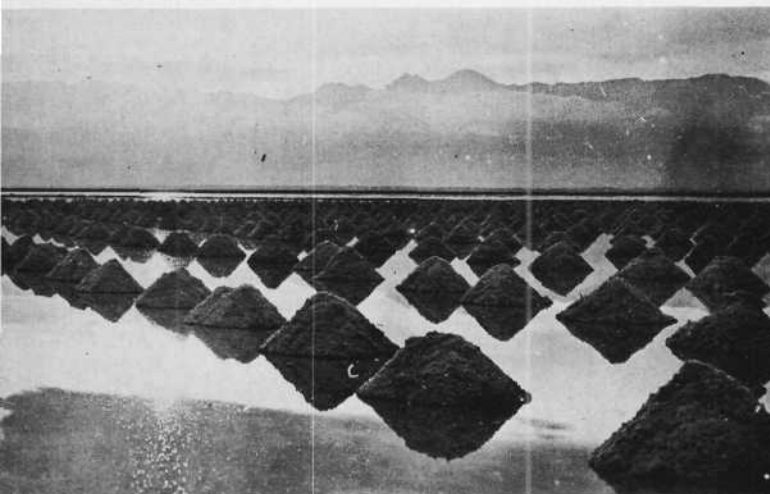
RIGHT: LAYTON'S SPRING, HIGH IN THE SLATE RANGE NEAR THE TOP OF LAYTON'S PASS. THIS WAS THE ONLY SOURCE OF FRESH WATER IN THE 30-MILE DISTANCE FROM MAGNESIUM TO THE EPSOM SALT MINE.



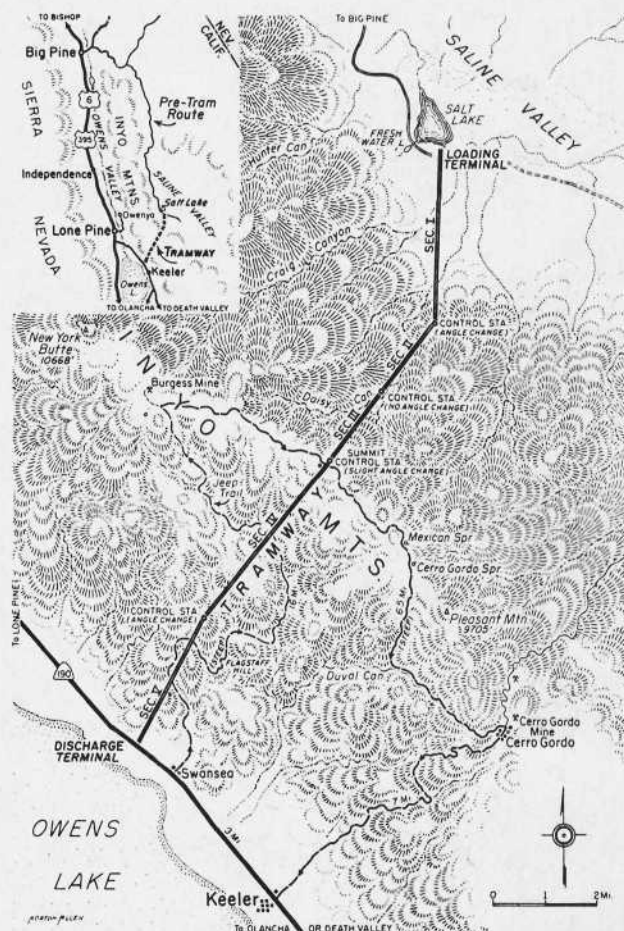
HUMAN CARGO OUT FOR THE THRILL OF A LIFETIME




NOTE DRY LAKE IN THE DISTANCE



MOUNDS OF SALT CONCENTRATE IN SALINE VALLEY





VOICES OF THE DESERT NIGHT

By LAURITZ MUHLBACH

THE MAN WHO wandered into my camp wore the attire of a tourist, the signs of age and overwork, and spoke in the accents of the land of skyscrapers. I gave him coffee, directions back to the highway, and a half-hour's conversation, and while he warmed to the coffee and the talk there remained something wistful about him—almost forlorn. What interested me most was his remark: "Never dreamed there was anything like this desert. This afternoon I stopped the car and got out. Not another car nor a house in sight, and the *stillness*—absolute silence!"

Absolute silence! The phrase echoes the reaction of so many who stand for the first time alone on the desert, gazing at bright horizons that encircle a vastness they scarcely apprehend; seeing farther than they have ever seen before—and hearing nothing. Has the sense of hearing been dulled by the din of urban surroundings, or simply subdued by the overwhelming visual impression?

But some learn to discern detail where they once saw only vastness, and gradually to hear sounds in the "absolute silence." They experience an awakening of the senses that may amount essentially to a recapture of lost youth.

Years ago, when I led nature hikes for a boys' camp, we sometimes played the "listening game." In the evening some boy might exclaim, "Gosh, it's quiet!" I would say, "You just think so. Be still for five minutes, and then tell me everything you've heard." Then nature's gentler sounds

would fall on straining ears until the dusk itself seemed clamorous. In deepening twilight we would hike back to camp, each boy listening now, newly aware of the continual murmuring of the world around him.

Many times on the desert I have played this listening game. Somehow it is best when night has laid rest over sun-weary eyes and the sense of hearing quickens anew. Although I am many miles and many days from the desert as I write, inwardly I hear the old familiar camp sounds: the quiet licking of the blue flame that flickers from the little bed of mesquite coals before me; the hum of insects in the little circle of firelight; perhaps the stirring of saddle horses and pack animals in the darkness; and the wind. It may be only a breeze that sighs softly of contentment in the mesquite; or it may be a strong wind that gathers power from the dark miles between my camp and the dim horizon whence it comes, driving hissing sand against my bed tarp.

After listening awhile, I am drawn away from the camp glow into the blue-shadowed night. Then there is a new quickening of the ear, and suddenly the comforting fire itself seems an intruder. I move farther into the night, and the desert is alive with sound.

It reminds me how much of the desert's animal life hides by day and conducts its business only under the cool, friendly cover of darkness. There are scurrying deer mice and kangaroo rats, perhaps a desert tortoise with its peculiar lurching gait—if I listen closely I can discern them all.

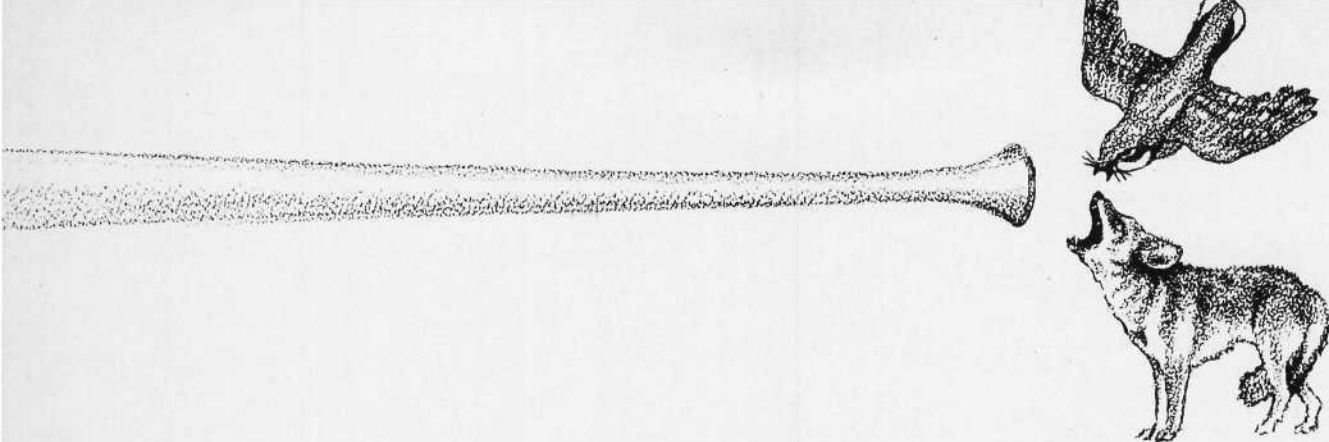
I find myself trying to identify desert plants by their audible response to the wind. Galleta grass and mesquite are easy, especially if the mesquite is heavy with dry beans. Tall dry agave stalks stiffly state defiance to the blast; thorny ocotillo dryly moans indifference to all winds. There may be an uneasy scraping of harsh yucca leaves; Joshua tree and juniper sing distinctly different wind songs.

I remember one night long ago in a little shack near Mojave, when the wind raced down the Tehachapis and screamed all night long in a loose screen door—protesting the intrusion of man and his works.

The rule of the desert is paradox. The desert offers the viewer a great depth of vision, yet withholds nearly all but the sounds of the immediate surroundings. In softer regions you may clearly hear the blows of an axe on the opposite mountainside, or the clang of milking pails on the farm two miles away. But most of the desert's sounds are little sounds, and it guards them jealously.

Yet there are exceptions to this rule. In the vast firmament of little sounds, occasional greater ones stand out. These are rare, far-carrying sounds that even the most callous may hear, and they bring thrills that fortunately come oftener than once in a lifetime.

I can recall a good number of such desert sounds that have sent thrills of one kind or another along my spine—the persistent buzzing of an unseen rattler; the distant, melodious chorus of a flock of wild geese. But, the best of all I remember those two



voices of the night that represent the desert and all it means to those who love it.

IF IT be any time from March to October and I have made a lucky choice of campsites, when the little fire burns low I may be serenaded by the poorwill, that night bird whose sweetly monotonous chant seems to convey a sense of timelessness, of simple joys and the joy of simplicity—the essential qualities of lifelong youth that constitutes the magic of the desert.

There is an ancient legend that tells of a young padre who left his mission gates one evening to walk in the desert, and became charmed by the song of a night bird, so that when he returned he found his friends gray-headed and babes in arms grown to manhood. Was it a poorwill that charmed the padre? I think so.

If you happen to be more conversant with English literature than with ornithology, the poorwill's call will likely remind you of the poet's line: "*... shall I call thee bird / Or but wandering voice?*" Wordsworth had another bird in mind, but his rhapsodic question aptly fits our desert poorwill. A "wandering voice" is generally all he seems to be, although the poorwill is a substantial desert character.

I shall say little here of ornithology. Any good bird book will tell you about this soft-winged cousin of the whippoorwill, with its mothlike flight and owlish eyes, and that prodigious, bewhiskered mouth so won-

derfully adapted to catching in mid-air the large-bodied insects on which it feeds.

Mystery must inevitably surround a creature that is known chiefly by its voice. To this day, I have heard hundreds of poorwills for every one that I have seen and, I think I would rather have it that way. There is a mystic quality about the voice of the poorwill in the desert night, and I suspect that it is partly the voice of the listener's inner self. A leading ornithologist of the past century, Elliot Coues, wrote: "This cry is lugubrious, and in places where the birds are numerous is enough to excite vague apprehension on the part of the lonely traveler, as he lies down to rest by his campfire, or to break his sleep with fitful dreams in which lost spirits appear to bemoan their fate and implore his intercession." To others of perhaps a more sanguine temperament, the call is full of sweet melancholy and lonely beauty of the wild places.

I like to remember the night three of us made a drycamp on a wide stretch of sand where the Mojave Desert begins to shade into the Colorado Desert. It was late March of a spectacular "wildflower year": great white evening primroses starred the billowing sands about our camp. As we bedded down for the night our nostrils were treated to the fragrance of the blooming desert, and our ears to the music of the poorwills from the base of the mountain.

A never-to-be-forgotten night of quiet stars, faint fragrance and wild, haunting melody as "poor-will! poor-

will!" sounded over and over through the darkness, the measured soprano chant lulling us to sleep with its sweet simplicity: primeval music of the night, declaring its promise of abiding youth in the unsullied desertland.

I SAID THAT there are two voices of the desert night that I listen for above all others. The second singer is more whimsical than the poorwill, and I can seldom be sure when and where I will hear him, or that I will hear him at all. He is Don Coyote. His songs are varied and have many meanings, both to his kind and to me. On special occasions I think he sings of freedom—the pure freedom of the wilderness which some are privileged to find under unstained desert skies.

A few winters ago I went with a field party to make wildlife investigations on the desert near the border. We moved down the mountains late one afternoon and pitched our first drycamp above a wash in a broad desert valley. It was a calm night, the sky so luminous that every cactus and ocotillo cast a faint shadow on the pale sand.

When the last coals of our little fire winked out, there was no point of light anywhere in that immense landscape to suggest the presence of another human being. Each of us, I suspect, lay wake in our sleeping bags a little longer than usual. The last thought I remember having before dropping off to sleep was: If

continued on page 37



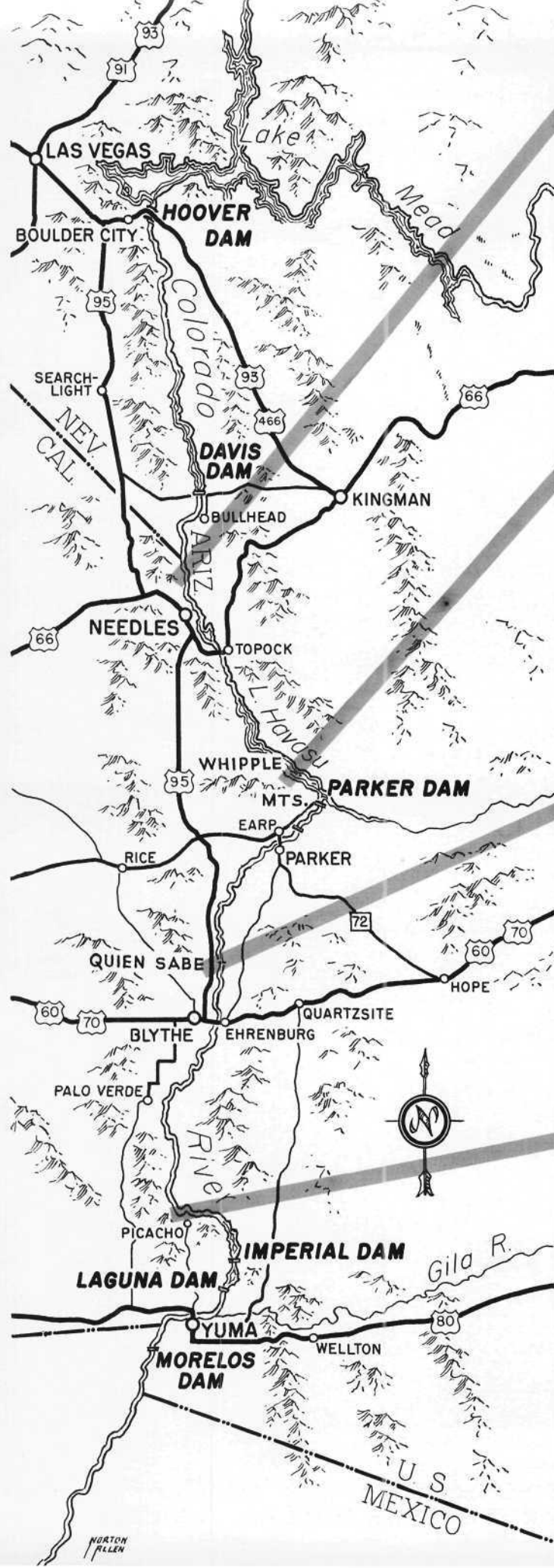
"Colorado River Silhouette." Photo by Jack Yoakum, Parker, Ariz.

CALIFORNIA'S PLAN FOR THE COLORADO RIVER



Where river and desert meet

THE STATE DIVISION OF BEACHES AND PARKS OUTLINES FOUR MAJOR PROJECTS TO HELP EASE THE MOUNTING DEMAND FOR MORE DESERT - WATER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES . . .



TOPOC GORGE

This exceptionally remote and inaccessible region consists of 20,000 acres—with 12 miles of river frontage. Approximately 6000 acres are privately owned. The terrain is such that access (other than by horse or foot trail) is, and will be, difficult and expensive to construct. At present the area is receiving considerable use along the riverfront. Upon completion and acceptance of the land-use plan for the Lower Colorado River area by the Department of Interior, the Bureau of Land Management probably will enter into an exchange program with the private landowners to remove their holdings. The California State Division of Beaches and Parks would then acquire the land, but development of the area would not be undertaken until such time as fish and wildlife values deteriorate, or the U. S. Fish and Wildlife program in this area is altered. After 1966, trails and primitive camp facilities would be developed in inland areas as rapidly as public demand dictates.

WHIPPLE MOUNTAIN

This project encompasses 180,000 acres of land falling on Lake Havasu and extending inland 18 miles to the vicinity of the old county road between Earp and Needles. Approximately 26 miles of lake frontage is included in the project. This area would become "two parks in one"—the water-oriented strip along the Colorado River, approximately two miles deep; and the desert wilderness inland area which the state describes as having "tremendous scenic, geologic and botanical values." The state planners go on to say that "development should be limited to outpost and primitive types of access and facilities, utilizing trails, designated routes of travel or cross-country travel." Project studies will be completed in 1963, and the state hopes to have the lake-shore campgrounds staffed and open to the public on a minimum basis. More campgrounds, roads and boating-swimming facilities should be completed in 1964. The trails and outpost campgrounds would come after 1966.

QUIEN SABE POINT

Involved here are 10,600 acres, with 15 miles of river frontage extending inland a distance of two miles. The area in the southern part rises abruptly in terraces from the Colorado River into desert hills, and is traversed by Highway 95 the full distance of the project. The Giant Figures pictographs north of Blythe are included in the project area. The northern portion has high values in wildlife—mule deer, dove, quail and waterfowl—to be administered by the California Department of Fish and Game. The state has not established a firm timetable for the development of Quien Sabe because of the land status which is, to some degree, tied to the interstate boundaries settlement and the ownership of Indian lands which may encompass a portion of the frontage. However, it is possible that budget requests for boat-launching and swimming facilities, and campgrounds, could be available as early as 1964-65.

PICACHO STATE RECREATION AREA

The project consists of 23,700 acres of U. S. land, approximately 4354 acres of which are presently under lease to the State Beaches and Parks Division. About 343 acres of private land lie within the boundaries. The project has eight miles of river frontage, extending inland from the river approximately seven miles—an area of extensive washes, rugged volcanic mountains, and riverbottom sloughs and brakes. The state classifies it as "outstanding as a scenic and recreation area, having excellent access to the river and the headwaters of Imperial Reservoir. The mountainous regions (Picacho Peak area) are exceptionally scenic and rugged." Wildlife is abundant and the ecology is varied and highly interesting. The area is presently open to the public on a minimum basis. Administrative facilities have been constructed, and informal camp areas and suitable water supply developed. Opportunity for overnight and day-use facilities are virtually unlimited. The state plans to construct circulation roads, parking areas, campgrounds, picnic areas, public boat ramps, trailer areas, concessions for supplies and services, plus primitive camping areas (accessible by trail) in the remote portions of the park. The major budget requests for these facilities will probably come in 1964-65.

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◀ Evelyne Grierson's painting of "The Devil's Gate" between Silver City and Gold Hill, on the road to Virginia City, Nevada. The road is now paved.

I PAINT THE GHOST TOWNS

By EVELYNE BOYNTON GRIERSON

FROM OUT of the West of the Redman came the West of the Miner. The war whoop of the Indian gave way to the discovery whoop of the gold-silver seeker. The Indian's impermanent camp became the whiteman's wood-and-stone town—perhaps, in the long view of history, a habitation more fleeting and ephemeral than the rude camps of the earlier inhabitants of this land.

I first became interested in Western ghost towns while tagging along with my husband on his Indian artifact collecting trips. As suggested above, many of the mining towns were built on or near old Indian campgrounds. While my husband looked for arrowheads, I would sketch the decaying building and the brush-cluttered streets.

As we repeated our visits to these sites over a period of eight years, it became increasingly evident that the mining towns were deteriorating at an alarming rate. I then decided to turn some of my sketches into oil paintings in order to have a record of the dying towns as they appeared in that brief pause between final breath and total death.

I picked up by paint brushes—and stopped.

It would not be easy, for it was my intention to put something into these paintings that went beyond the mere photographic record of brown buildings, broken windows and bits of litter. That extra *something* was the mood of these towns—the feeling that they had once been filled with life—that the people who had lived and worked and died here had left an important imprint on our Southwest culture. I wanted people who saw my pictures in the 1960s to come away with a touch of what I *felt* about the old towns. And what I felt was love.

And so, I had to start over. Before I could put the bonanza towns on canvas, I had to learn all there was to know about them.

I asked questions. I listened. I talked to old-timers. I read. The "facts" I gathered sometimes varied on major and minor points—but I was not after facts, *per se*. I wanted, through close association with the old camps, to find the answer to the question: "What had life really been like in this place?" I asked more questions. I re-read the literature, and found obscure — and priceless — new writings to pore over.

After many months of this, the desire to paint took hold. In fact, I couldn't wait.

I built back up from the old sketches. Aurora was one. I shall never forget the first time I saw her! It was raining, and I was soaked (we had walked into the town, the road being washed-out). The sound of thunder rolled down the mountainsides and echoed through the canyons. A strange exuberance swept through me when I spotted the first rain-soaked building. Some of the abandoned homes still had furniture, old trunks and clothing, newspapers, glass doorknobs (which had turned



EVELYNE GRIERSON

purple in the sun). There was a hand-carved walnut bedstead in the room above the Last Chance Saloon . . . a horse-head was painted above the old livery stable. A covey of quail hid among the tombstones in the cemetery high on the pinyon-crowded flat above town. We built a fire in one of the homes with a fireplace, and dried out.

A short time later, Aurora's bricks were sold. Her buildings came down. Someone took a fancy to the glass doorknobs, and carted off doors and all. The roof was removed from the schoolhouse, and the south wall of that fine building fell in. The Last Chance Saloon today is almost col-



DAYTON, NEVADA

Evelyne Grierson

lapsed. Aurora's name has been removed from the late maps of Nevada.

The other towns I painted have not suffered so drastic a fate as did Aurora, but they have felt the calousness of progress. While I was painting Virginia City a few years ago, the back wall of the Biorth Building came crashing down. A building is missing today from the Gold Point scene I painted, but the little Joshua tree in the foreground hasn't changed a bit. Two buildings at Washoe City are gone, but the third is still standing.

Progress ruined Devil's Gate by widening and paving the road—even the tree in my painting is now a memory. Not too many years ago you could drive up to Silver City's Dew Drop Inn. Today the old hotel is a fire station, and the main street is paved.

Dayton still has its school, church

and camel barn. The interior of the old depot has been remodeled, and is today the residence of Chester and Helen Barton and their lynx cat.

The Fort Churchill painting took three repeat visits spread over three successive Octobers to capture the sun's warm glow on the old adobe

For a review of Mrs. Grierson's book, "I Paint The Ghost Towns," see page 38.

walls. Everytime I went to Mason to paint, it rained—finally I painted Mason in the rain—puddles and all.

Pinegrove is as you see it in my painting—probably because the last leg of the trip into town must be covered afoot. At Pinegrove there was an old rocker and a captain's chair sitting patiently on an old porch. I didn't paint them into my picture because the town wasn't lonesome anymore—there was an expectancy of better times returning.

Candelaria is scattered. The two little cabins, bank and hardware store on the approach road from the east, made the best picture. Cerro Gordo's Chinatown and the old cemetery remain. The beautiful colors of Rawhide's Sand Springs Range will spill out over the tailing piles until the end of time. Bodie's remaining buildings soon will be protected by the California state park system. The red, green, yellow and white tailing piles in the Randsburg-Johannesburg district will never change.

Ballarat is a special story. While sketching this quiet camp on the flank of the Panamint Mountains, I saw a dust cloud approaching on the road. A car pulled up, and out jumped a very energetic man with pen and pad in hand—a census taker. He looked disappointed when I told him I was not a permanent Ballarat resident.

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GOLDEN EAGLE

By EDMUND C. JAEGER

author of DESERT WILDFLOWERS, THE NORTH AMERICAN DESERTS, DESERT WILDLIFE, OUR DESERT NEIGHBORS, THE CALIFORNIA DESERTS, A NATURALISTS DEATH VALLEY

THE GOLDEN Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) is almost universally considered the "king of birds." Although downgraded by some writers for its "difficult to explain" occasional gentleness and inferiority in courage to the falcon, this diurnal bird-of-prey is rated by those who really know it as a creature of great power and majestic character. Had the Golden Eagle been strictly an American bird, it, rather than its near-relative, the Bald Eagle, might well have been chosen as our national emblem.

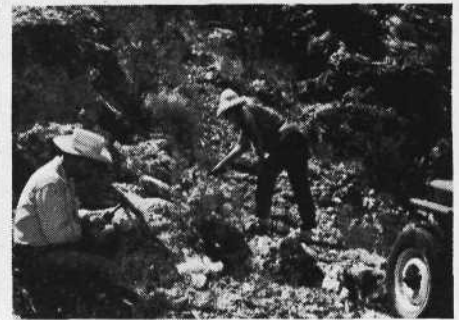
President Kennedy's recent signature on a law protecting this valuable avian friend (as well as the Bald Eagle) brings to us anew the importance of shielding this noble bird from further persecution by man.

The range of the genus *Aquila* includes the continents of Europe, Asia, much of Africa and North America from Alaska to California and northern Mexico, including arid Baja California. As a rule the Golden Eagle is a rock-haunting, cliff-nesting bird, but may frequent more open lands, where, as on the prairies and flat desert areas, it must resort to nesting in trees, on the steep banks of rivers or even on the ground.

About the only place it is now found as a nesting bird is from the Rocky Mountains west and southward. Once listed as abundant in the wilder parts of the Southwest (especially in Southern California) the Golden Eagle is today comparatively infrequent-to-rare due to the stupid unbridled use of poisoned baits, constant trapping, ruthless persecution by hunters, and destruction of its habitat. Egg collecting, once so popular among certain ornithologists, also played a part in the population thinning process. "Both the Bald Eagle and the Golden Eagle will be exterminated if the 'misguided' slaughter continues," says Dr. Wal-



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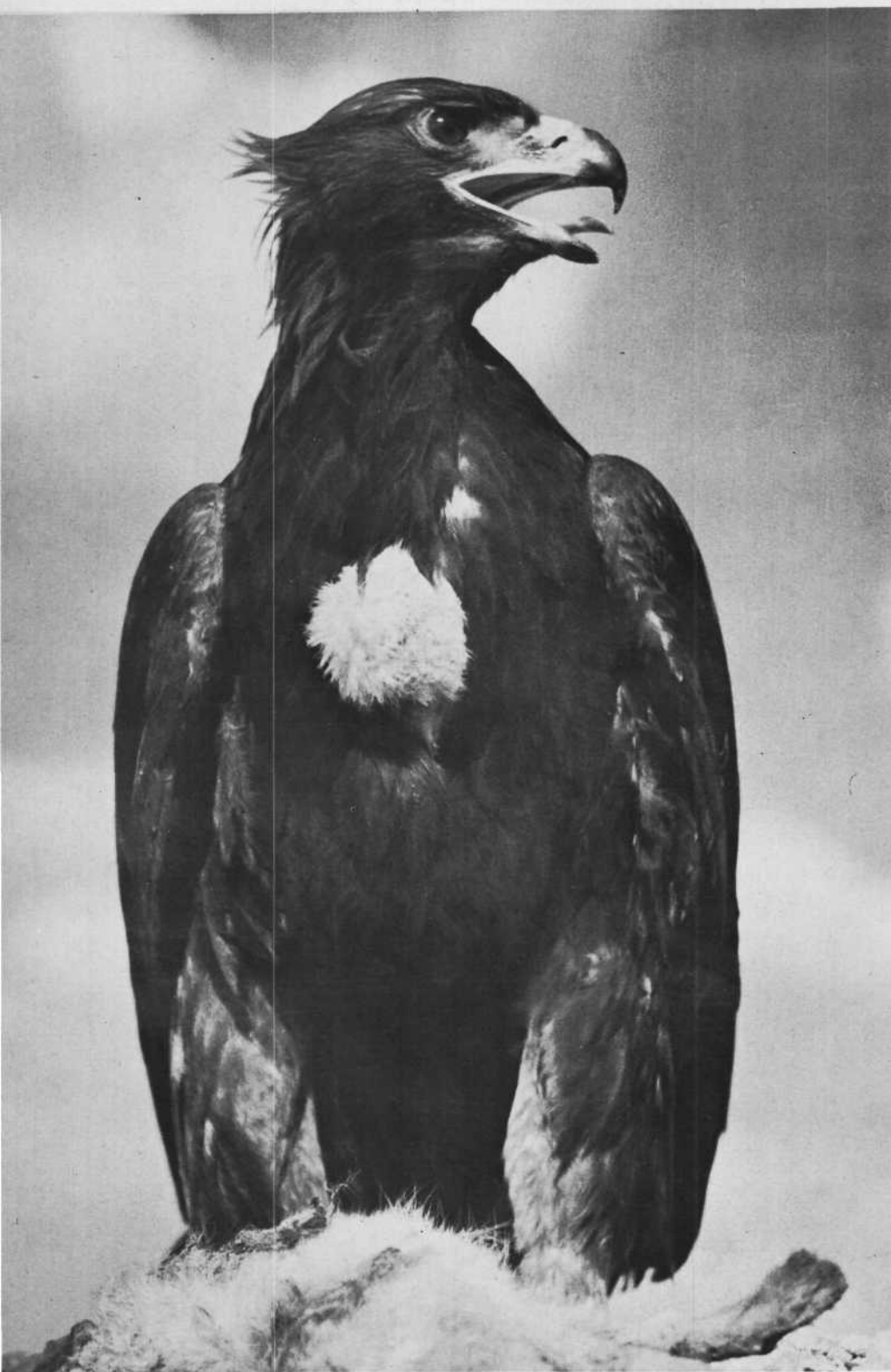
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IMMATURE GOLDEN EAGLE, ABOUT FOUR WEEKS AFTER LEAVING NEST. Photo by George Bradt.

that are being shot, but birds as well from northern United States and Canada."

In late autumn the migrating birds go southward. As they reach Montana and Wyoming they are the victims of the feather hunters. When Texas is reached "the massacre really begins."

Most of the eagle nests I have observed in Southern California were on shelving cliffs, in tall tree yuccas or cottonwood trees; one was located at the top of a windmill tower which had lost its wheel and wind-tail.

The largest one, found high on a commanding bench of a conical hill of granite boulders on the Mojave Desert, appeared to be very old, used over a period of many years. It was a bulky platform at least five feet across and almost as high. A few sticks, mostly of creosotebush, had been added each nesting season. The lining was of yucca fibers, rootlets and feathers. Quite a number of bones, mostly of the black-tailed hare, protruded here and there from the sides. A green bough of fresh leaves added early in the nesting season was the mark of present occupancy. Several times—without seeming protest—Red-tailed Hawks took over the nest for a year or two.

The nest atop the abandoned windmill was located in the center of one of Nevada's long desert valleys uniformly covered with salt-bush and other low gray-green shrubs. The area's phenomenal jackrabbit population meant easy hunting for the eagles.

Some pairs of eagles have two nests which they use alternately. One such pair of nests I found in southern Arizona—one in a cottonwood tree in the hot desert valley, the other upon a cliff in the surrounding, somewhat cooler, mountains. A rancher who lived nearby said that when one of the birds, the female, had been shot at the site of the valley nest, the male soon appeared with another mate, and they then utilized the mountain nest for two years; after that they occupied the valley nest.

My friend Joe Dixon of Escondido, has found nests which eagles have lined with pungent pepper tree and eucalyptus leaves. It is his belief that the birds choose these materials because their odor might discourage lice and other parasitic insects. Fresh creosotebush leaves found in nests of desert-dwelling eagles may act in a similar manner.

Nests of different pairs of eagles are usually several miles apart. Dur-

ter R. Spofford, who is leading the effort to prevent disaster from coming to our fast-diminishing eagle population.

Writing in *American Forests*, Steven Morris says: "In Texas sheepmen have even hired hunters to shoot at the eagles from airplanes. John Caparis of Alpine, Texas . . . says he has 'killed 25 eagles in one day, 1000 in a single winter and 12,000 in his

twenty years of shooting.' When a lone pair is killed, another will move in to occupy its nesting area—in range of the hunter's guns."

Says Dr. Spofford: "Just as surely as a single leak drains a reservoir, so the Texas slaughter is draining off the eagles of half a continent."

Again quoting Steven Morris: "This is because it's not only Texas eagles

ing the breeding season each pair of birds usually has a very definite region over which it hunts for food. This is often spoken of as a "killing territory." Once the killing territory, often several square miles in extent, has been established, it is defended against all intruders. The hunting routes are soon well-established and the birds go over them in a definite pattern and with great regularity day after day.

There are usually sets of two eggs, occasionally one or three. Large, thick-shelled and almost spherical, they are whitish and variously spotted with fine grayish, purplish or brown dots and blotches. Some I have seen were without markings of any kind; but I believe this is a rare condition. Eggs are usually laid in late spring.

The eaglets are fed by both parent birds, but mostly by the female, twice each day. At first the parents strip down the fur and feathers from the food brought in. Lowell Sumner tells of two-week-old chicks weighing 10 times as much as when first hatched, so rapid is their growth.

Always surprising is the deportment of the parent birds when the nest is approached. Rather than putting up a fierce fight as we might expect, they fly away, often to a considerable distance, with seeming indifference to the fate of the eggs or young.

Once the fledged birds leave the nest, they soon are left to their own ingenuity in securing food. Young Golden Eagles are unfortunate in being less wary than adults, and hence are often killed by ranchers and young boy-hunters with guns, who think the eagles are "chicken hawks." Then there are the uninformed so-called sportsmen who kill them because they think these birds spend their lives destroying game birds that should exist only for the benefit of human hunters.

"During the nesting season," says Alexander Wetmore, "the parent birds call in shrill high-pitched tones, and the male often tumbles in the air somewhat like the male Marsh Hawk. This is accomplished from a high elevation by suddenly closing the wings and dropping headfirst toward the earth, checking the fall just before reaching the ground; then rising again to repeat the performance."

The fully grown Golden Eagle may measure up to 35 inches in length; wing-spread is now enormous—up to 6½ feet! The male is the smaller bird. The color is always dark brown

to almost black except for the golden or rufous-brown of the lanceolate feathers of the back part of the neck. The feathers of the legs extend clear to the toes. The Bald Eagle's lower leg is covered with hard scales.

The usual food of the Golden Eagle largely consists of small creatures such as marmots, hares, rabbits, ground squirrels, prairie dogs, wood rats, tree squirrels and pocket gophers. Occasionally it takes weasels, opossums and foxes; rarely porcupines and skunks. It is not adverse to taking some of the larger birds such as quail, band-tailed pigeons, ducks and geese, wading birds and even owls. Smaller birds are usually caught to provide tender food for the very young eaglets. Although it is possible that once in a while they feed on lambs or fawns, these instances are really quite rare. If they kill larger animals such as calves and deer, it is usually the sick and wounded ones which are taken. Many of the smaller mammals are hunted down in the open by a single bird. Sometimes they strike from a great height, but as often from a "rough and tumble" low flight. If hunting from a considerable height, the birds swoop down onto their quarry with a mad rush at once exceedingly swift and skilful. In pursuing jackrabbits and cottontails, two birds may combine their efforts in the chase. This type of hunting prevents the victim from having a moment's respite. The prey is killed quickly by deep thrusts of the very strong, long, sharp claws into the victim's body. The talons generally penetrate to every vital part, and the animal dies with scarcely a struggle. Prey weighing more than seven or eight pounds cannot be carried away and must be eaten on the ground.

A friend told me recently of seeing five Golden Eagles, perhaps the members of a single family, feeding on a jackrabbit that had been killed on the highway. As he approached, four of the birds flew away but the fifth remained by its food.

Some years ago, I saw a Golden Eagle ludicrously harassed by a pair of ravens which persistently mobbed it as it flew. Several times one of the ravens almost alighted on the big bird's back. Then the eagle would turn over and menacingly present its talons toward the annoying ravens. Dr. A. C. Bent, in his *North American Birds of Prey*, wrote that on a number of occasions he had seen an eagle demurely sitting on the ground surrounded by a circle of ravens waiting for it to fly so that the sport of mid-air mobbing might begin. ///

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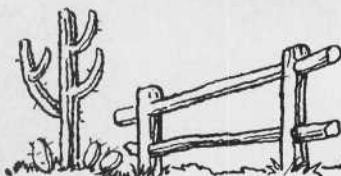
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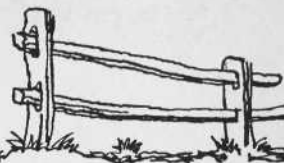
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FOR INFORMATION on desert acreage and parcels for sale in or near Twentynine Palms, please write or visit: Silas S. Stanley, Realtor, 73644 Twentynine Palms Highway, Twentynine Palms, California.

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ARIZONA PICTOGRAPH FIND

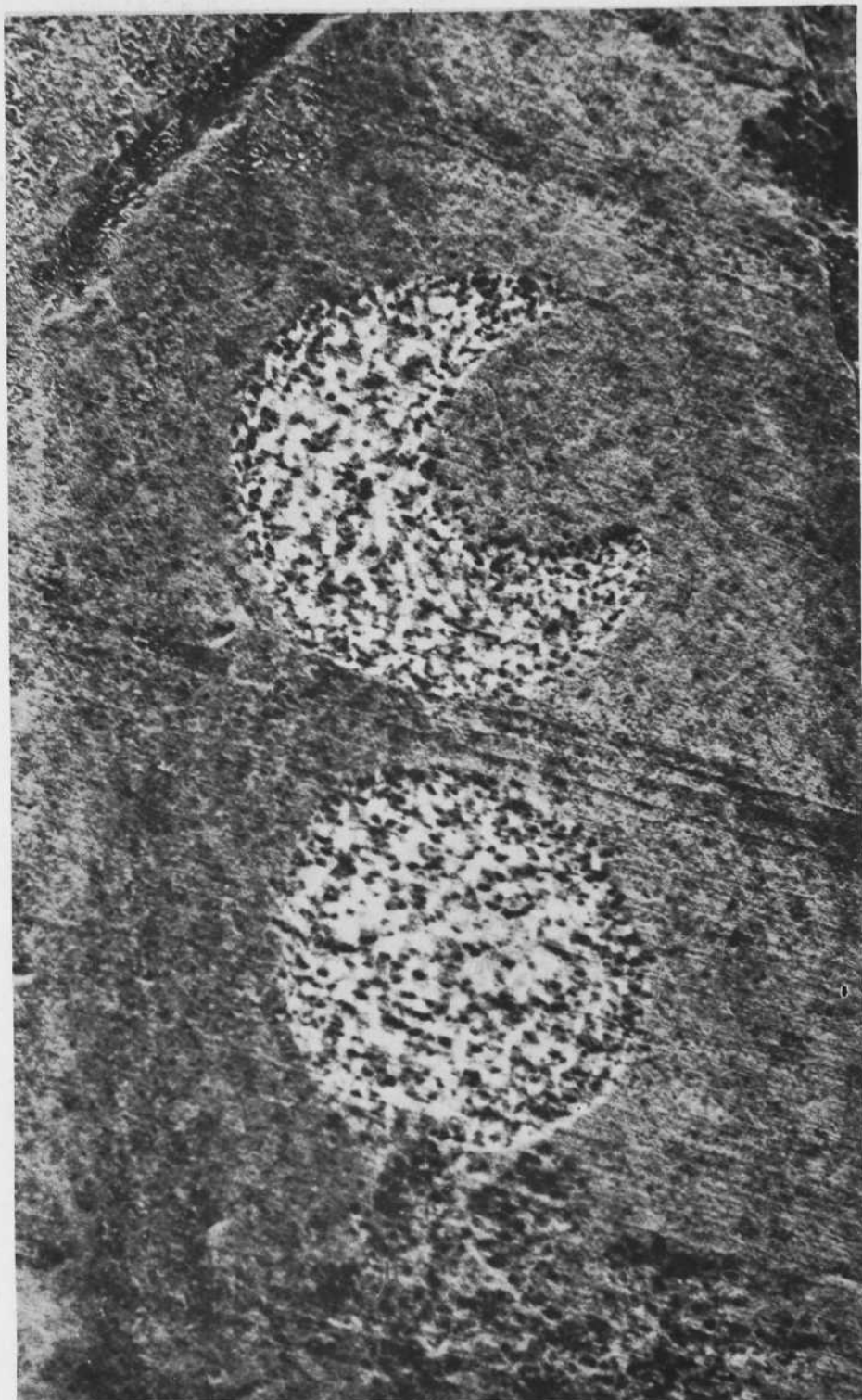
Records In Rock Of A 1054 A.D. Star Explosion

By WILLIAM C. MILLER

Mr. Miller is research photographer for the Mount Wilson and Palomar Observatories. Archeology is his hobby, and each summer—since 1948—he and volunteer helpers make exploration trips into the Navajo Reservation in northern Arizona.

A WANING MOON cast its light over a wild and rugged Southwestern landscape. A maze of canyons were etched in inky blackness across the rolling plain, while a few miles to the south the crenelated walls of a chalk-white mesa gleamed in the feeble light, caves and crevices shrouded in deep shadow. In one of the caves the flickering light of a dying fire revealed a group of recumbent figures clustered about the embers.

As the first gray light of dawn appeared in the eastern sky, one of the figures stirred, yawned and stretched, then slowly rose. Sleepily he made his way down the sloping floor of the cave to the wide portal, and inspected the familiar scene before him. A glance to the southwest revealed the first fleecy clouds that were forerunners of the thunderheads that would later that day bring welcome July rains. As he turned to re-enter the cave, he glanced casually at the crescent moon hanging in the eastern sky—and stopped dead in his tracks. He stood motionless for a moment, then with a shout rushed into the cave, shaking the others into wakefulness. Followed by the baffled group, he



NAVAJO CANYON PETROGLYPH

rushed out to look again with wonder and fear at the apparition in the sky.

In one of the nearby canyons another aborigine awoke at the first indication of dawn and began preparation to join a hunting party. But when he left the shelter of his little stone house he found the other hunters standing in a close group whispering among themselves as they gazed into the eastern sky. As he glanced in that direction, he felt a shiver run up his back and his scalp tingled with

fear. All thought of the hunt was forgotten as they talked together in subdued voices, trying to solve the riddle in the sky. Here was something they had never seen before, but a scene so striking in beauty—and in portent for evil or good—that they immediately went to consult with the medicine man.

At both places, in the white mesa and in the canyon, there was much chanting, much preparation of offerings, as the people watched the



WHITE MESA PICTOGRAPH

strange object pass slowly across the sky. Next morning before dawn they were all out in the darkness to await the coming light to see if it would still be there. When the thin crescent finally rose above the horizon it was accompanied by a strange object, now very close and very brilliant.

It was an event that staggered the imagination, and about which they talked for days and weeks. They told their children about it, and their

children's children, and showed them the drawings of the moon and the strange object which the medicine man had made on the nearby cliff face to commemorate the strange event.

Half a world away, a sleepy monk atop a Chinese monastery gathered together his charts and records after a long night of contemplation of the stars. As he cast his final glance toward the east and the crescent moon hanging above the horizon, he froze

WHY NO MAP TO THE PICTOGRAPH SITES?

Wrote author Miller: "I strongly urge that no map be published in *DESERT* with this story. Sad experience has taught us to avoid pinpointing prehistoric ruins in popular stories and reports. To do so usually starts a tide of amateur explorers into the area, with highly detrimental results.

"But, even without a map, I suspect some of your readers will attempt to find the supernova pictographs.

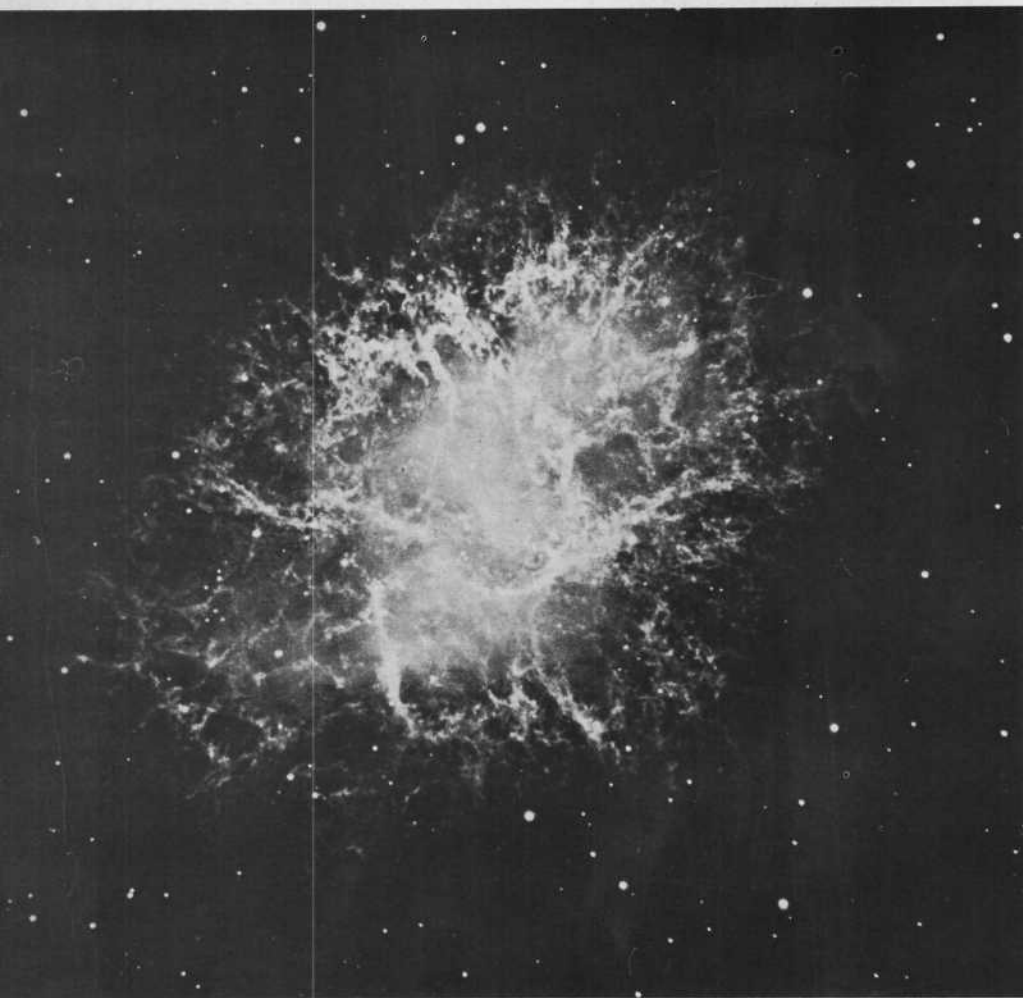
"It would be well to emphasize the very stringent nature of the Antiquities Laws, and the strenuous efforts on the part of the Navajo Police to apprehend all trespassers. The penalties are stiff, and fortunately the police are taking prompt action against all unauthorized exploration."

in his tracks, consternation and fear written on his face. The moon was not alone in the graying sky!

In Japan other oriental astronomers were likewise occupied, gazing with mixed wonder and awe at the strange celestial display. For in the brightening eastern sky, a short distance below the crescent moon, there shown a star of immense brightness, a star that had never been seen before. Its cold blue light was so intense that even the rising sun did not obliterate it. Throughout the entire day it sparkled, a source of wonder to all who saw it. The thin crescent moon with the brilliant star close below it presented a picture of striking beauty.

The oriental astronomers assiduously recorded in their archives this unique event which we now know was the appearance of a supernova, or exploding star. Their records were later found and translated by modern scholars. After correction for various changes occurring over the intervening centuries, the date of the first appearance of the supernova figures out to be July 4, 1054 A. D.

Present-day astronomers, studying a strangely shredded cloud of gas in



THE CRAB NEBULA AS IT APPEARS TODAY. THIS GASEOUS DEBRIS FROM A STAR EXPLOSION 900 YEARS AGO WAS "DISCOVERED" BY EUROPEAN ASTRONOMERS IN 1731. ONLY LATER DID THEY LEARN THAT CHINESE AND JAPANESE OBSERVERS HAD RECORDED THE ACTUAL STAR BURST ITSELF.

the constellation of Taurus, found that the nebula was expanding at the fantastic rate of 70 million miles a day! From the known dimensions of the nebula, they projected backward to determine the probable date of its origin. The answer was found to be sometime near the middle of the 11th Century. Searching for a record of some event that might have given rise to this strange nebula, they came upon the oriental records. There they found the account of the new star, and the position in the sky where it appeared. This is so close to the position of the nebula that there can be little doubt of their relationship.

But search as they would, no other accounts of the event could be found. In no other land on earth had anyone left recognizable records of the apparition of the supernova of 1054. This is the more amazing in view of the fact that this supernova was the brightest object, other than the sun and moon, ever to appear in the sky during the recorded history of man.

Nine-hundred years later, almost to

the day, Helmut Abt, an astronomer at Kitt Peak Observatory near Tucson, and I stood among the ruins of a large Anasazi site in Navajo Canyon in northern Arizona. On the adjacent cliff we saw a drawing of a crescent above a circle. Our minds flashed back to the previous year when we had seen a nearly identical drawing on a cave wall in the White Mesa, 25 miles to the south. Although our curiosity had been aroused at the sight of that first drawing of a crescent moon, a rare device in Anasazi art, we had concluded that it was just another, though unusual, "doodle" by an ancient artist.

The appearance of a second drawing, so like the first, excited our interest anew. Did these two drawings depict an actual event? Coincidence seemed such an unlikely explanation that we decided to explore all possibilities.

When making charts of the sky, astronomers throughout history have used circles or dots of differing size to indicate stars of various brightnesses. If these two drawings recorded an ac-

tual astronomical event, it was possible that the Anasazi had used the same scheme. In that case, the object shown below the moon must have been of considerable brightness judging by the size of the circles drawn by the two artists.

What astronomical event could have placed so brilliant an object close to the moon? The obvious choices, Jupiter and Venus, came close to the moon so often that their conjunction should attract no special notice. A comet is not bright enough to compete with the moon. This left only a nova, or exploding star, as a possibility.

The significant detail which greatly narrowed the list of candidates was the fact that the object lay along the path of the moon as it circles the earth. It was Fred Hoyle of Cambridge, England, who came up with the probable answer: the supernova of 1054 which occurred in the constellation of Taurus and, as mentioned earlier, is believed to have given rise to the Crab Nebula.

The prime question that had to be answered was this: Where was the moon and in what phase, on the morning of July 4, 1054? Every astronomical library has on its shelves volumes of tables prepared by Paul V. Neugebauer which facilitate the location of all the major planets, the sun and the moon at any date as far back as 4000 B.C., and into the future to 3000 A.D. With these tables it was soon found that the moon was a thin crescent in the eastern sky on the morning of July 4 and 5, 1054 and on the morning of July 5 it was located directly north of the supernova, and only two degrees distant!

Another question that needed answering was this: Were the two prehistoric sites at which the drawings were found occupied at that time? A study of potshards from the sites was made by Dr. Robert C. Euler, then of the Museum of Northern Arizona; the results indicated that both sites had been occupied at about that time.

Thus the available evidence strongly suggests the possibility that the prehistoric inhabitants of the White Mesa and Navajo Canyon were the only people, other than the Oriental astronomers, to record the amazing appearance of the supernova of 1054. Lacking a written language with which to record the events of their time, they seem to have done the next best thing and depicted the event in drawings which remained hidden for 900 years before we stumbled upon them.

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LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

The Desert Song . . .

To the Editor: I just could not let it go when I read in the October issue "Desert Detours" that there "isn't even one beautiful desert song." Has Oren Arnold never heard or read the lovely words of Sigmund Romberg's "The Desert Song"? The beauties of the land are well described with the words: "Blue heaven and you and I / Sand kissing a moonlit sky / Desert breeze whispering a lullaby / Only stars above you to see I love you!" To those of us who have learned to love the desert, this is a true desert song with a real inspiration.

RAE RINIIF
Westminster, Calif.

To the Editor: . . . enclosed is a copy of a desert song, "Arizona Home," which I wrote while living in Wickenburg in 1944-45. I hope you like it; many people did.

SHELDON P. FAY
Los Angeles

To the Editor: . . . George DeWitt wrote a desert song in the early 1940s. He was at that time bartender at the San Carlos . . . an old-timer in the Phoenix area. I am told by friends who know music that it is not a very good piece, but I enjoyed it.

MANLEY O. DIBBLE
Palmdale, Calif.

To the Editor: . . . try Walter Brennan's record, "Dutchman's Gold." Also: "Shifting, Whispering Sands."

ANDRIA HANOLD
Salton City, Calif.

To the Editor: I suggest that Oren Arnold throw his radio in the trash-barrel, where it belongs, and just sit and listen. If you love the desert as I do, you will hear the song of the desert — even if you hear nothing more than total silence.

W. A. SNELL
Del Mar, Calif.

Mrs. Wah of Pioche . . .

To the Editor: We read the September issue of DESERT with interest and delight, especially the story of Mrs. Wah who has been our good friend for many years. Mr.

and Mrs. Wah had been married according to Chinese custom when she first came to Pioche, and it was my father's privilege as Justice of Peace of Pioche Township to perform their American marriage. My parents, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur W. Thomas, lived in Pioche for more than fifty years.

MRS. GEORGE H. WALDA
San Francisco

Misplaced Sequoias . . .

To the Editor: In reference to Choral Pepper's article, "Misplaced Sequoias" (DESERT, Sept. '62), we too would like to make an "educated guess" as to how the giant sequoias of Nevada came into their present location.

Why not, instead of the "earthquake" theory offered by the author, consider the solution of the matter by simply assuming that the seeds were planted in Nevada by the previous inhabitants of the area? This hemisphere has been inhabited by man since long before the beginning of the life of these trees—and 300 miles is not far for people to travel, even afoot. In the same issue of DESERT we read of Henry W. Bigler, who "as member of the Mormon Battalion in 1846-47 . . . trudged from Fort Leavenworth to Los Angeles." This is a much farther distance than that between the habitat of the big trees in Yosemite and the Seven Giants in Nevada.

R. H. TERRELL
GERALD H. RENTFRO
Riverside, Calif.

To the Editor: I have contacted several people who have either lived in the Pioche area, or have been there and are familiar with the trees referred to in Choral Pepper's article.

It is the consensus of opinion that I have gathered, that the trees in question are not Sequoias, but some species of pine. State Park Ranger Harley Regan of Caliente reports that the trees are probably a Ponderosa Pine. Nevada State Park Superintendent William Hart is of the belief that they are a Western Yellow Pine, a name synonymous with Ponderosa Pine.

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CITIZEN'S BAND RADIO HOLDS

PROMISE AS A VALUABLE TOOL

FOR SOUTHWEST WORK AND PLAY

By JAMES TALLON

THANKS TO the Federal Communications Commission and the world of modern electronics, John Doe has a most valuable instrument at his disposal. In spite of the thousands of people now using and accepting it as a casual part of present-day living, literally thousands more have no idea this versatile device exists. Others who know, or have heard of it, have not a glimmer of its value, especially in the sparsely settled Southwest where communications are more often than not at a minimum. This little-appreciated instrument is the Citizen's Band Radio, both mobile and base units, and the tiny transistor walkie-talkie.

It all began when the FCC set up the Citizen's Radio Service in September, 1958. The idea was to provide Mr. Average American with short-range two-way radio communication. For almost two years this opportunity was almost completely overlooked, but of late word-of-mouth and publicity by radio manufacturers offering low-priced CB transceivers, plus the simplicity of securing a license, have fanned the spark into a bright flame and now the FCC is beneath a sea of applications.

Alaska aside, the Southwest is still the most remote section of the country. Although our highways become more crowded each day, just a mile or two off most main arteries there is near-wilderness. The traffic drops off immediately, and the blue-and-white signs that read "public telephone" disappear.

TOP: ERECTING A CB GROUND PLANE IS AN EASY JOB. THIS EFFECTIVE ANTENNA COSTS ABOUT \$15.

RIGHT: MOST COMMON USAGE OF CB RADIO IS BETWEEN HOUSE AND CAR





A PROSPECTOR RADIOS TO A PARTNER IN CAMP: "THE VEIN LOOKS PROMISING; BRING THE DYNAMITE."

The FCC has limited the input of CB transceivers to five watts. The expected base-to-base range is about 20 miles; base-to-mobile, 7 to 10 miles; and mobile-to-mobile, 3 to 5 miles. Under "skip" conditions—an atmospheric phenomenon—the radio waves will travel thousands of miles, but it is illegal to talk to these distant stations. In the clear, clean air of the open desert, a CB'er can expect about twice the normal ground wave distance, and there will be times when copy will exceed 50 miles.

It would require volumes to catalog the uses of CB, but it serves mainly as a radio-telephone between house and car, or ranch and pick-up truck. One southern Arizona ranch owner has equipped his house, car and pick-ups with five-watt trans-

ceivers, and his cowboys with one-pound transistor walkie-talkies—range: 7 or 8 miles used with base station.

Rockhound groups whose members tend to stray, find these walkie-talkies ideal for keeping check on one another. A photographer in a bird-blind can keep tab on the little woman reading in the shade of a paloverde. A prospector working in a mine shaft can keep contact with his partner at the mine shack. A hiker can report back to those in camp.

In the larger Southwest cities, Citizen's Band Radio has saved millions of gallons of gas and probably as many man hours. It is already credited with the saving of life, the apprehension of criminals, valuable assistance to the Civil Defense Corps,

and countless other contributions to the public welfare.

How do you join the ranks of the CB'ers? The requirements are simple: If you are a citizen of the U.S. and over 18, you are eligible for a license. Upon request, the FCC (Washington 25, D.C.), will mail you form 505. This is filled out (requires but minutes) notarized and returned. There are no tests or studying, but it will take at least eight weeks to receive your license.

A pair of good radios will cost you a little over \$200. Hook-up, installation and tuning is a simple matter for any radioman. There is very little upkeep. CB radio may prove to be a real asset to you and your family on your next adventure into the desert back country. ///

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"PACIFIC DUMP YARD"

(continued from page 11)



"EL PATITO" UNDERWAY. Photo courtesy Dr. Postma, Scripps Institute of Oceanography.

to pull the treacherous grades south of Puertocitos. Here we had much use for our power winch. Often we had to detach the trailer and slowly winch it up over boulders and out of gaping ruts, always tense with the fear of it slipping off the cliff.

Our road (if I can be allowed to honor it with so generous a title) finally led to the water's edge at Guerro Negro ("Black Warrior") Lagoon. El Patito had performed as well as could be expected on land. Now she would get a taste of salt water.

We camped on the shore. The night passed swiftly, as nights do after a hard day's trek, and at dawn we were up and about, fairly bursting with enthusiasm over what the day might bring.

The water is beautiful in this enchanted land. Beneath the surface and down through the clear water, life is everywhere—fish in endless variety scurrying along in an effort to elude us—and yet curious as to what was going on above.

Scammon's Lagoon is the breeding place and central nursery for the Great California Gray Whale. Our 20-mile-long island, completely uninhabited, acts as a breakwater for this famous body of water.

Our original plan was to follow the shoreline of the lagoon and land on the hard sand of the island's beach before reaching the breakers of the Pacific. Nearer and nearer we came to the mouth of the lagoon and greater and greater became the swells. El Patito was at the crest at one moment and in the trough the next. When we were quite near the breakers we turned straight for the sand, placed the transmission in low gear, engaged all four wheels and with the

propeller doing all it could, plowed into the softest bottomless beach imaginable.

We were stuck!

Wes tried reverse and rocking and every other trick he could think of, but it was useless. While we were pondering what to do, the tide kept coming in, and with it the surf pounded poor El Patito with ever-increasing fierceness.

Out came the shovels, but for each spadeful of sand we removed from before the wheels, the surf deposited two. Discouraged, we sat down on the sand and viewed our dilemma. Even if we could get out, would the entire sand island be the same?

We found some driftwood and tried placing it before the tires, only to have it drift out with the tide. As we struggled with the sea, we noticed that the action of the waves was packing the sand firmly around the wheels. So we started our power again—both propeller and all wheels—and with Scotty and I pushing and the motor giving its all, we broke free. Wes headed El Patito back into the lagoon.

We had no choice now but to approach the island from the Pacific side. The sea quickly became much rougher. The bow of El Patito plunged into gigantic breakers. Closing the front hatch and side vents to prevent flooding the engine, Wes headed into the beach. This time the force of the breakers worked with us, literally casting El Patito upon solid sand.

Now that we could relax in the sandy haven with nothing but warm solitude to keep us company, we scanned the landscape for something

besides sand and water, and soon found marine refuse of every description and shape: TV tubes, light bulbs, mop handles, life preservers, wooden crates, boxes . . . this is literally the garbage dump of the Pacific.

Shortly after invading the dunes farther back from the beach, I found a 22-inch-diameter Japanese glass float. Then we heard Scotty shouting with excitement a short distance away. He was holding up a bottle deeply colored purple by the sun. After an hour or so of poking around, we had several purple bottles.

Our most valuable find was an 18-inch-high clay urn which had strange dotted hieroglyphics near the neck opening. Later, museum experts established the fact that our urn is of European origin, dating to the 16th Century.

Another interesting find was an carbone of a whale. These bones are in demand for research work. Their unusual acoustical qualities are being studied by scientists.

Before our adventure ended, we found scores of glass floats, apparently all from Japan. They appeared to be hand-blown, for they are somewhat irregular in shape. Each is inscribed with Oriental characters.

At low tide we could run on the hard surf-beaten sand at break-neck speeds of 40 to 50 miles-per-hour. After averaging from five to 10 mph on the trip down the peninsula, this truly seemed reckless. As El Patito sped down the beach, the sea gulls

would follow. They seemed to enjoy their strange visitor.

But, time always runs its course, and all too soon it was necessary to prepare things for our trip back to the border and home. We discovered that dried seaweed made excellent padding material, and we carefully packed our "treasures" in the duck.

After all the excitement of our little adventure up to this point, the seven-mile return run over the salt water seemed a little uneventful. We did learn something, however, that is worth passing on to anyone planning to take a boat or contraption similar to ours to the sand island: the best time for navigating the lagoon is at high tide. The topography of this entire area is extremely low. The lagoon is very shallow, and we found that in certain areas there just wasn't enough depth for flotation. It is quite a strange feeling to be breezing along (about four mph) and suddenly feel the wheels bumping along the bottom. In many instances we would turn out to a deeper channel and continue on our course. This finally became impossible, and we had to proceed in four-wheel drive—and propeller. After an hour or so of this we made it to solid ground.

Many times we dream of a far-away island where nothing but nice things happen. Except for the absence of flowing palm trees and exotic background music, I feel this Baja California sand island is exactly what most of us have in mind. God—and El Patito—willing, we shall return.



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OATMAN FIELD TRIP (continued from page 7)



MARTIN CUESTA

were taken from the gold mines in this vicinity. In those boom days the community had two banks and a dozen stores. The buildings still standing are dwarfed by the tremendous tailing piles from the Tom Reed and United Eastern ore mills. Today, Oatman has a gasoline station, a good cafe, a hotel (The Ox Yoke), a grocery store, and some curio shops—another example of an old mining camp experiencing a new lease on life. A few minutes spent in almost any one of the above establishments will uncover at least one miner who can tell you of the good old days, and express an undying hope for the future of the district's now silent mines.

Two miles beyond Oatman, our bus passed Gold Road, a real ghost town. Here begins the steep, twisting and narrow grade through the Sitgreaves Pass into the Black Mountains.

Once on top of Sitgreaves, the fire agate collecting area spreads out before you. Dropping down the grade, seven miles beyond Oatman is Ed's Camp where lives Martin Cuesta, the genial owner of the fire agate claims. For a while Martin was the exclusive miner of the brilliant material from this deposit, but he has opened it to collecting for a small daily fee. Martin allows only amateurs to collect here, for he is interested in seeing that this deposit is not quickly depleted. If a collector should be fortunate enough to find a large amount of material in any one day, he is not allowed to collect the following day—no matter what the inducement. On a few occasions, the entire diggings have been closed for short periods in order to discourage those who, as Martin says, "Tried to hog the

game." The token fee that Martin charges is well worth the protection he gives this valuable area against vandals and greedy collectors. I have seen him refuse to charge a newcomer until that person begins to collect good material—and many times this comes about after Martin takes the visitor out to one of the choice areas and shows him the material. He will even dig-up specimens in demonstration, then give them to the collector. Is there anything more one can ask? All this, plus a nice place to camp, with water, sanitary facilities, and tables.

The fire agate is found on the walls and floor of a deep basin to the north of the highway. This is an old volcanic area, the fire agate occurring in the vugs and crevices of the lava. It weathers out and drops into the washes where it is covered with sand and clay.

Joe stopped on the shoulder of a wide spot near the collecting area, and the bus spewed forth a stream of eager rockhounds who spent the rest of the afternoon digging in the most likely-looking places. Joe did as well as any that first afternoon, but time did not allow much more than exploratory scratching of the surface. When the air horn on the bus called us back, the faces of all in the group showed signs of happy, expectant "treasure hunters," each eager to get back to "that spot" in the morning.

That evening volunteers prepared our main field trip banquet: barbecued chicken, potatoes and gravy, garlic bread, tossed green salad, sliced peaches and beverages.

After dinner the other rockhounds staying at Ed's Camp came over to our campfire and we had a lively talkfest. Many passed around the inevitable bragging-rock which true rockhounds never go anywhere without.

Everyone was up at six a.m. to enjoy a leisurely breakfast and the quiet freshness of a new morning on the desert. The grounds are covered with cottonwood, mesquite and juniper, with the Black Mountains towering above it all.

A few minutes after eight, we were back in the collecting area. Martin was there to point out the "hot spots," some of which he had marked with signs reading "Dig Here." Martin sees to it that his guests are properly oriented before they strike out into the heart of the digging area.

Black chalcedony predominates in the lower levels of the basin, and although it seldom contains "fire," when it does it is usually green and bronze with the green becoming a background color. The best material is found in the small washes, a few inches under the sand and clay. Most of the material has washed down from the higher levels, and was trapped behind boulders. Digging for fire agate calls for hard work, but little of value comes easily in mineral collecting. If you can pick up gem stones as easily as you can country rock, the gems would be only as valuable as country rock. Even though the work is hard, good fire agate is plentiful enough here to reward the diligent worker. In a recent letter, Martin states that the finest fire agate ever found here is now being uncovered. I am certain that the field is still very far from being worked out.

This material is one of the greatest challenges to the lapidary. The layer of fire may be only 1/1000 inch thick, and the stone may have only one such layer. A lapidary gets a big thrill out of finishing a fine fire agate; the thrill is twice as great when the specimen happens to have been personally collected in the field. ///

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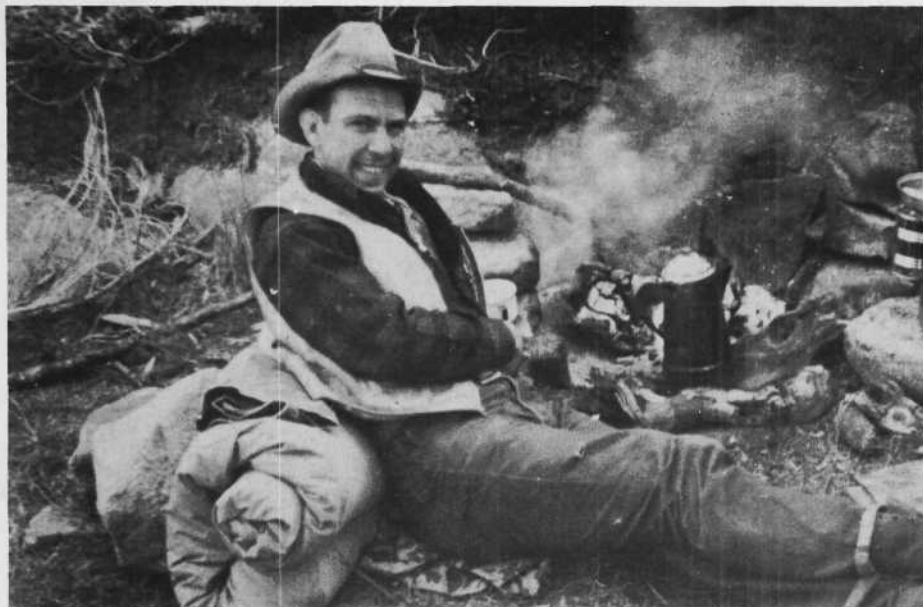
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THE AUTHOR ON A DESERT CAMPING TRIP

only a coyote would tune up, this wilderness setting would be complete.

Shortly before dawn I awoke. A cold white moon had climbed above the Fish Creek Mountains, and the desert was a world of shadow patterns on a land that gleamed like snow. And suddenly the coyote chorus sounded.

From just across the wash rose the thin soprano wailing, all voices at times nearly in unison, sometimes a tangle of many voices—alternately a melange of wild sound and a refrain of strange, primitive order. Its ventriloquial quality made it seem to be coming from everywhere at once. It sounded like 15 or 20 voices; more likely it was only five or six. I felt the hair rise on the back of my neck and I held my breath, trying to catch every thrilling note.

The song almost died away, and then burst again into wild, exulting crescendo that seemed to ring with delight in all things wild and free under a clear crescent moon.

The singing stopped as suddenly as it had begun. For minutes I listened intently, but heard no more. I pictured a band of dim gray shapes moving with swift stealth toward secret places in the shadowy canyons that furrowed the distant mountains. The Don Coyote Chorale left the night to moonlight and to me, and to the red dawn that came an hour later.

* * *

The desert conveys, above all else, a sense of freedom. Freedom is essentially subtle, a difficult quality to define or explain. To the ancient

Greeks of Delphi it was akin to self-knowledge. Western poet Badger Clark expressed the same idea when he wrote of the desert:

*And there, alone, with the
man's world far,
There's a chance to think who
you really are.*

Most of us do well simply to describe this sense of freedom in terms of our own experience, should it be our fortune to find it. I caught its pure essence one night on the desert—in a moonlit sanctuary where the Don Coyote Chorale provided the anthem.

///

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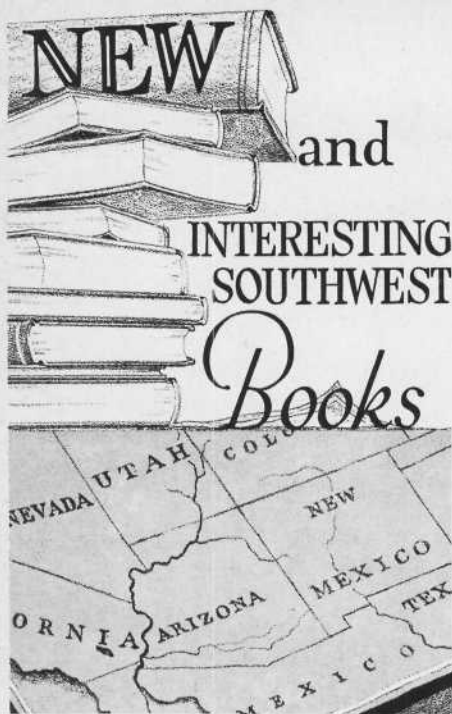
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WESTERN ghost towns seem to find it difficult to stay dead; they come alive with amazing frequency through the author's pen or the photographer's camera. Latest of the revivals is Evelyne Boynton Grierson's booklet: *I PAINT THE GHOST TOWNS*. Mrs. Grierson has enjoyed a long-time love affair with the pioneer boom-or-bust camps that bought their brief, brilliant careers with their own gold and silver. She has been painting (and researching) the ghost towns for many years. The booklet has 21 reproductions of Mrs. Grierson's paintings, plus a couple of hundred words of text accompanying each painting. A few of the ex-boomers include Virginia City, Dayton, Fort Churchill and Aurora—all in Nevada; and Bodie, Cerro Gordo, Ballarat and Randsburg in California. A color reproduction of the

Devil's Gate, near Virginia City, adorns the cover of the book.

Another woman who has a deep affection for the outdoor Southwest—Laura Adams Armer—has recently authored a book, *IN NAVAJO LAND*, telling of her decade with the Indians of Northern Arizona and the Four Corners area. The book is illustrated with her sensitive photographs, taken in the 1920s. Much of the material appeared in *DESERT* two years ago. Mrs. Armer has a warm and sensitive feeling for her Navajo friends of four decades. The book is valuable as an authentic view at a time and people now long gone.

Erle Stanley Gardner, who knows a mystery story when he sees it, has become increasingly intrigued with the once-forgotten-land of Baja California. The peninsula is now being richly harvested for its store of natural history and archeological discoveries. No one goes into Baja California more thoroughly equipped, machine-wise, than Gardner. His latest book on the subject, *THE HIDDEN HEART OF BAJA*, takes quite a time to get to its centerpiece, the discovery of some Indian paintings in some caves near the Vizcaino Desert. This latest work continues Gardner's adventures, started in his recent book, *HOVERING OVER BAJA*. If you liked the latter, you'll want *THE HIDDEN HEART OF BAJA*. The book is heavily illustrated with photos, some in color, of Lower California, its terrain, shrubs, people and its Indian-painted caves.

In a book that is about almost everything except the Desert Southwest he loves so deeply, Joseph Wood Krutch, onetime drama critic, conservationist, and author, tells with pleasant humor and honest nostalgia of his life and times and friends. *MORE LIVES THAN ONE* is Krutch's autobiography. It is fluffy stuff, written,

THE NEW BOOKS . . .

I PAINT THE GHOST TOWNS, by Evelyne Boynton Grierson; 42 pages; papercover; \$3.

IN NAVAJO LAND, by Laura Adams Armer; 107 pages; hardcover; \$3.95.

THE HIDDEN HEART OF BAJA, by Erle Stanley Gardner; 256 pages; hardcover; \$7.50.

MORE LIVES THAN ONE, by Joseph Wood Krutch; 380 pages; hardcover; \$5.

ALSO CURRENT . . .

BECKONING DESERT, by Ed Ainsworth. Twenty-eight anecdotes from an acquaintance with the Southwest that spans many years. 264 pages; hardcover; \$5.95.

GREAT SURVEYS OF THE AMERICAN WEST, by Richard A. Bartlett. The work of four major survey parties—Hayden, King, Powell, and Wheeler. 408 pages; hardcover, \$7.95.

ALMADA OF ALAMOS, *The Diary of Don Bartolome*, translated by Carlota Miles. Life during Mexico's turbulent years—1859-63. 196 pages; hardcover; \$6.

HOW TO ORDER . . .

The books listed above can be purchased by mail from Desert Magazine Book Store, Palm Desert, Calif. Please add 15c for postage and handling per book. California residents also add 4% sales tax. Write for free Southwest book catalog.

it would seem, as a vacation from his more profound and philosophical books about Nature and Man. Krutch appears to have had a good time looking at himself on the end of a pencil. Those who enjoyed Krutch's many excellent nature-theme books will enjoy seeing Krutch through *MORE LIVES THAN ONE*.

— CHARLES E. SHELTON

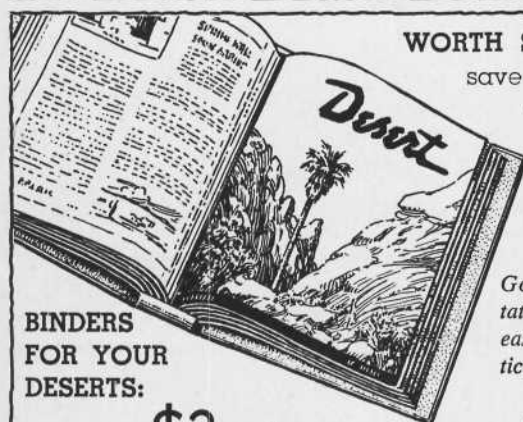
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PREMIUM AWARDS for Southwest Literature

We take pride in presenting this selected list of the outstanding books reviewed in *Desert Magazine's* twelve 1962 issues. The six volumes below were judged to be the most excellent in their respective categories.

—The Editors

BIOGRAPHY

1962 WINNER: *EDWARD KERN AND AMERICAN EXPANSION*, BY ROBERT V. HINE. One of the great explorers and mappers of the Western frontier was Edward Kern, artist, topographer, and cartographer. Twice he accompanied Fremont on trips to the West, and later went as a government cartographer with the Brooke expeditions to Japan and Siberia. 180 pages plus more than 40 historic illustrations. \$6.

TRAVEL-RECREATION

1962 WINNER: *SOUTHERN UTAH'S LAND OF COLOR*, BY ARTHUR F. BRUHN. A guidebook of the southern portion of Utah, including maps. This paperback book tells of the interesting history of the area. It touches on Indianlore, plant life, and Mormon pioneers. Notes on the settlements, and ghost towns. Excellent color photos enliven the 70 pages of this handy guide to one of the Southwest's most interesting areas. \$1.25.

HISTORY

1962 WINNER: *GREAT SURVEYS OF THE AMERICAN WEST*, BY RICHARD A. BARTLETT. The Westward expansion of the mid-19th Century was a period of romantic exploration mixed with sweat and dust and Indians. This book tells about the King surveys, the Hayden explorations, the Powell river trips, and the Wheeler surveys in the Desert Southwest. Well illustrated, the 408 page book sells for \$7.95.

INDIANS

1962 WINNER: *THE INDIAN TRADERS*, BY FRANK McNITT. The close working relationship between the Indians and the traders has been reported with selected examples by the author. He has dug deep into old records, government files, and family correspondence to document some of the famous trading posts and their owners. The 394 page book is well illustrated, and sells for \$5.95.

HOBBY

1962 WINNER: *WAGONS, MULES AND MEN*, BY NICK EGGENHOFFER. For those who make a hobby of collecting Westerniana, this book will become a bible. It chronicles, with text and sketch, the evolution of frontier wagons, from the Spanish *cavetas* to the Conestogas, Concords, and chuckwagons. Excellent illustrations by the author make the book a real collector's item for those who revere the Old West. 184 pages. \$8.50.

NATURAL SCIENCES

1962 WINNER: *CALIFORNIA DESERT WILDFLOWERS*, BY PHILIP A. MUNZ. One of the West's top botanists has turned out this excellent guide to the desert flowers. Dozens of illustrations, many in full color, will help the desert visitor identify the plants he finds in the dunes and washes of southwest California. The book is authoritative but non-technical. The 122-page hardback edition sells for \$4.95.

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